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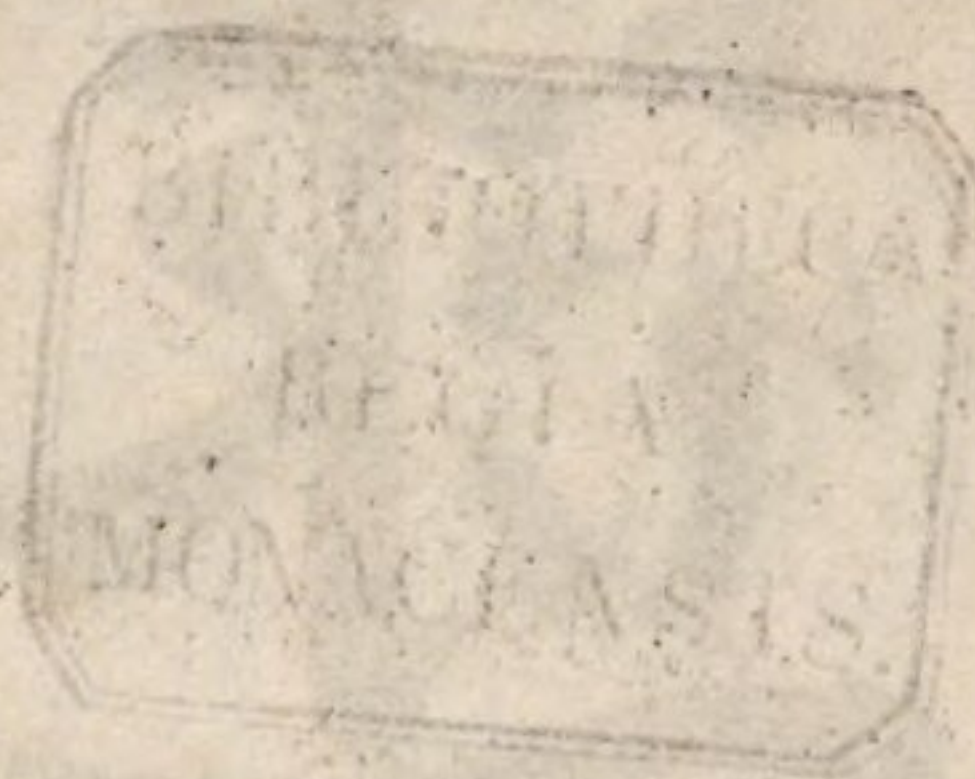
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or the Fortunate Union.*

Oriental Translation Fund.
INSTITUTED 1828.

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF
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THE
FORTUNATE UNION,
A ROMANCE,

TRANSLATED FROM THE CHINESE ORIGINAL,
WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,
A CHINESE TRAGEDY.

By JOHN FRANCIS DAVIS, F.R.S.
MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY, AND OF THE
ORIENTAL TRANSLATION COMMITTEE, &c.

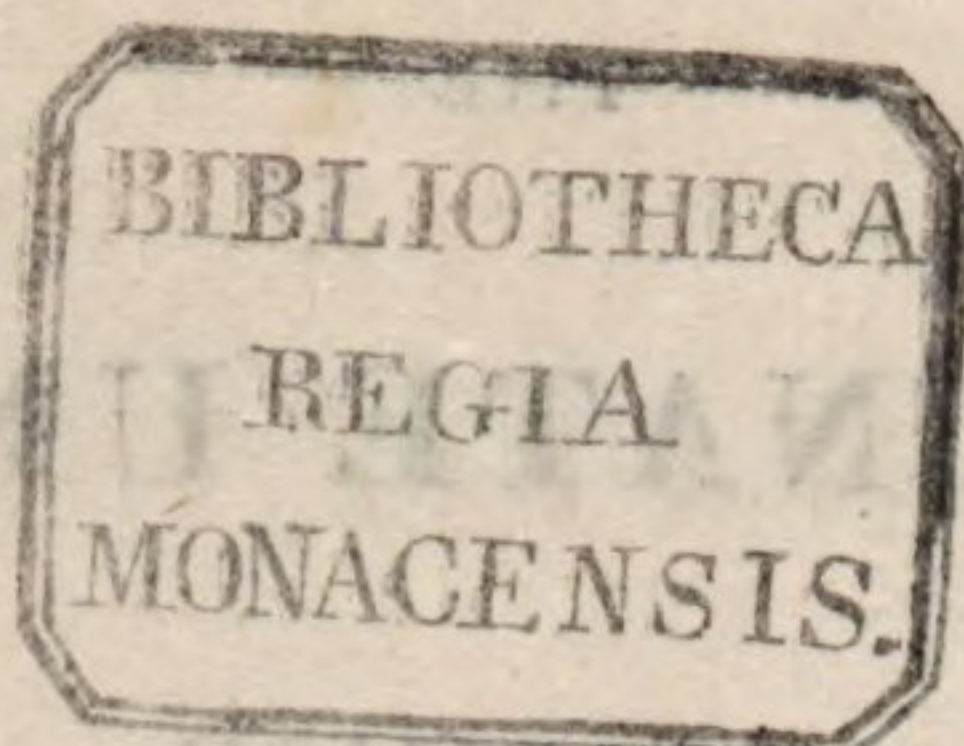
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1829.

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FOR THE

TRANSLATED FROM THE CHINESE ORIGINAL

WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

SIR GEORGE THOMAS SPENCER

A CHINESE TRAGEDY

BY JOHN FRANK DAVIDSON

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY, AND OF THE

BRITISH MUSEUM, AND OF THE

IN TWO VOLUMES

BY JOHN FRANK DAVIDSON

AND

THE TRANSLATOR

LONDON:

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1855

TO

SIR GEORGE THOMAS STAUNTON, BART.

LL.D. F.R.S.

&c. &c. &c.

THIS VERSION OF A WORK,

WHICH HE HAS ALREADY PERUSED IN THE ORIGINAL,

IS WITH MUCH ESTEEM INSCRIBED,

BY HIS VERY FAITHFUL

FRIEND AND SERVANT,

THE TRANSLATOR.

PREFACE

TO

SIR GEORGE THOMAS STAUNTON, BART.

THIS VERSION OF A WORK,

WHICH HE HAS ALREADY PERUSED IN THE ORIGINAL,

IS WITH MUCH ESTEEM INSCRIBED,

BY HIS VERY FAITHFUL

FRIEND AND SERVANT,

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PREFACE.

THE following translation was the amusement of some leisure hours in the country which it describes. The perusal of the original work, entitled *Haoukewchuen*, or 'A tale of the fortunate, or appropriate union,' had impressed the translator with a good opinion of its merits; and, after finishing the two first chapters on trial, he was encouraged to proceed towards a complete version of the Romance, with the addition of such notes and explanations as his long personal acquaintance with the people might qualify him to afford. The illustrative parts have derived advantage from the able assistance of the Rev. Dr. MORRISON; while some botanical notes were the contributions of JOHN REEVES, Esq. of the East-India Company's service, F.R.S. and L.S. a gentleman well versed in the natural history of China.

The *Haoukewchuen* seems to relate to the period when the *Ming*, or last native dynasty, occupied the throne, previously to the Manchow Tartar conquest: but, with the exception of
some

some changes in their dress and *coiffure*, the Chinese are at this moment, in every respect, the identical people which our work describes.—The very great number of typographical errors in the original, almost inseparable from the mode in which their books are printed,* were, in the first instance, carefully revised and corrected by a competent native.

It is nearly seventy years since Dr. Hugh Percy, Bishop of Dromore, edited from a manuscript, partly English and partly Portuguese, and dated more than a century ago, what was little better than a copious abstract of our romance, and without the poetical passages, under the title of the ‘Pleasing History.’ In this (commencing, it will be perceived, with the very title), much was mistranslated, much interpolated, and a great deal omitted altogether. One notable instance of omission is the heroine’s visit to the tombs and the pavilion, in the fourth chapter. Any Chinese scholar who thought it worth his while to compare the ‘Pleasing History,’ with the Haoukew-chuen,

* It is scarcely necessary to mention that each page is stereotyped on a block of fine-grained wood ;—any slip of the carver’s instrument is therefore frequently left uncorrected, as the correction involves, either the insertion of a new piece of wood, or the commencement *ab initio* of a new block.

chuen, could not fix upon a better portion of the work than the five memorials in the seventeenth chapter of the original.* These, in the Chinese, are excellent specimens of composition in that particular line, but in the misnamed version they have scarcely been attempted. The ‘Pleasing History’ speaks of a penknife † among a people who have no pens—makes a delicate lady talk of “her enemies being sacrificed, and their flesh offered to appease her resentment” ‡—represents the hero entering into debate with his attendant concerning his own marriage §—with many other the like instances. The most remarkable case, however, is where the Editor, misled by his manuscript, accuses the Chinese author of ‘an affectation of modesty’—whereas, the original is so outrageously the *reverse*, that we could not do otherwise than suppress the passage altogether, towards the end of the third chapter. In justice, at the same time, to the Haoukewchuen, it must be observed that this passage, and another short one, are the only untranslateable specimens throughout the work.

But

* The real divisions of the romance are, without any adequate reason, confounded in the ‘Pleasing History,’

† Pleas. Hist. vol. ii. p. 61. ‡ Vol. ii. p. 51. § Vol. ii. p. 198.

But it would be absurd to detract from the merit of Dr. Percy's labours on account of the imperfection of his materials, or to deny that he most ably edited, and very correctly illustrated (except where his version misled him) what certainly was, at the time when it appeared, by far the best picture of Chinese manners and society that we possessed. He was naturally puzzled by some parts of his manuscript, and expresses his surprise in notes at a number of incongruities, which, on a reference to the original, are not found to exist.

In the Haoukewchuen we see the most singular people on earth, (self-insulated as they are from all the rest of the world), portrayed by a native hand in almost every variety and condition of human life.

Quicquid agunt homines—votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
Gaudia, discursus—nostri est farrago libelli.

The interest and bustle of the scene, the spirit of the dialogue, the strong delineation and strict keeping of all the characters, joined to the *generally* excellent moral that is conveyed throughout, may serve to impress us with no unfavourable sentiments in regard to Chinese taste. The story commences with an act of generous devotion on the part of the hero, and the gratitude of the person whom he obliges

obliges becomes the ultimate occasion of his own triumph over the combinations of his enemies. The profligate, the malicious, and the base, when they have exhausted all the resources of ingenuity, meet with their just reward ;—while rectitude, prudence, and courage carry their possessors not only unharmed, but glorious, through every trial. In the rival is exactly portrayed the reckless audacity of a young minion of wealth and power :—and the low devices of the uncle, ' spite of the craftiness of the fox, and the slipperiness of the fish (to both of which he is compared) serve but to multiply his mortifications and defeats.

It may be proper to observe, that in the hero and heroine are accurately described the principles of the Confucian sect of philosophy, —a sect which in its professed admiration of virtue, and in its high tone of self-sufficiency and pride, assimilates somewhat to the ancient Stoics. Many of the precepts which the disciples of Confucius are in the habit of repeating, cannot be surpassed in wisdom and practical excellence. They talk of 'treating other men according to the treatment which you would desire at their hands'—of 'guarding the *thoughts*,' as the sources of action, &c.;—but in common with every other scheme of doctrines merely human,

human, theirs exhibits much that is exceptionable both in principle and practice. Revenge, or the *lex talionis*, was in some cases enjoined by Confucius himself,—and *humility* (though this virtue seems to have been inculcated by their sage) is not a distinguishing trait of his disciples. Combining within their own body all the talent and intellect of the state, and certainly almost all the virtue that is to be found in the country, they look with great contempt on the superstitious votaries of Buddha and Laoukeun. The translator received the following very just opinion of them from a gentleman whom thirty years residence at Peking had qualified to judge. “The lettered class possessing a great ascendancy over the people, the policy of each successive dynasty has fully availed itself of their services:—and it is without doubt to this concentration of talent that China owes her wealth, her peace, and her prosperity.”

As we often find in our own favourite fictions, a number of the names in similar Chinese works have a reference to the characters of those who bear them. Thus the hero of the Fortunate Union is named from *iron* (quasi Ironside); the heroine is *pingsin*, ‘icy-hearted;’—a term, however, which in her country means *chaste*, and not what we should call *cold heart-*
ed,

ed. Her father's designation literally means 'dwelling in singleness of purpose,' which sufficiently expresses his inflexible character—and so of many other appellatives. The individual personages are occasionally known under different names. In our translation, however, it has been thought advisable to adhere to *one only for each*, as a means of preventing perplexity, and avoiding the unnecessary multiplication of ill-looking and worse-sounding exotic words. The use, too, of those copulatives disjunctive, called hyphens, has been forborne, as they serve rather to separate than unite the syllables of names, which by the Chinese are pronounced as much like single words, as any polysyllables in European speech. In regard to titles of honour, the translator was obliged to make use of equivalents from our own language. *Laouyay*, the ordinary address of a magistrate in China, is sufficiently expressed by our common term 'worship;'—and the Chinese title *Tajin* (literally *magnate*) is pretty nearly rendered by 'lordship' or 'excellency.' The higher terms of respect, being less familiar and vulgar, may be occasionally used with a sparing hand;—but to tack such household appendages as 'mistress' and 'miss' to foreign names like the Chinese, can only be attended with

with a ridiculous effect, and certainly does not convey a just impression of the original.

The 'Fortunate Union' may be considered as a more faithful picture of Chinese manners, inasmuch as the hero espouses but *one wife*. It is not strictly true that their laws sanction *polygamy*, though they permit *concubinage*. A Chinese can have but one *Tse* or wife, properly so called, who is distinguished by a title, espoused with ceremonies, and chosen from a rank of life, totally different from his *Tsëč*, or handmaids, of whom he may have as many or as few as he pleases; and though the offspring of the latter possess many of the rights of legitimacy, (ranking however after the children of the wife,) this circumstance makes little difference as to the truth of the position. Even in the present romance, the profligate rival aims at effecting his union with the heroine, only by setting aside his previous marriage with her cousin as informal. Any Chinese fiction, therefore, (and of these there are many,) which describes a man espousing two wives, is in this respect no truer a picture of existing manners, than in respect to any other silly or amusing extravagance which it may happen to contain. These observations are not hastily made, being the result of careful examination and enquiry, and
derived

derived in China from native authorities ; and the present work affords sufficient corroboration, were any required. The resolution of the scholar Hanyuen to suffer death, rather than allow his daughter to be degraded to the rank of a handmaid, even to a noble ; and the attempts of the same noble, towards the conclusion of the story, to espouse the heroine Shueypingsin as his wife, *because* he had just lost his former spouse, afford abundant confirmation. In fact, the wife is of equal rank with her husband by birth, and espoused with regular marriage ceremonies ; possessing, moreover, certain legal rights, such as they are :—the handmaid is bought for money, and received into the house nearly like any other domestic. The principle on which Chinese law and custom admit the offspring of concubinage to legitimate rights is obvious—the importance which attaches in that country to the securing of male descendants. It is plain that the *Tse* and the *Tsëë* stand to each other in very much the same relation as the Sarah and the Hagar of the Old Testament, and therefore the common expression *first* and *second wife*, which the translator himself has used on former occasions, in imitation of his predecessors, is hardly correct.

The reader will observe many remarkable
points

points of resemblance between the 'Fortunate Union' and our own novels and romances at the present day. Every chapter is headed by a few verses bearing some relation to its contents, and appropriate lines are occasionally introduced as embellishments to the story. Care has been taken to give a correct version of these poetical passages, as well as to explain the remote allusions which they frequently contain. A prose translation of poetry is confessedly objectionable, and rhyme sometimes imposes trammels which may interfere with the strictness of the sense. A middle course was therefore adopted, and recourse had to blank verse, which, while it admits all that is desirable on the score of fidelity, is less crabbed and uninviting than mere literal prose. That the student of Chinese, however, might be able to avail himself of the translation in reading the original, a perfectly literal prose version of the poetical passages has been printed as an Appendix at the end of the last volume. In these may be observed some of the principal points noticed in the translator's 'Treatise on the Poetry of the Chinese,'—particularly that of *parallelism*, which in numerous instances is as apparent as such a feature can be rendered out of the original language.

The

The scattered poetry of the Haoukewchuen does not comprise above four hundred lines in the aggregate : but to represent adequately the *meaning* of these in a literal, and their *spirit* in a metrical version, gave the translator nearly as much trouble as all the rest of the work. Except in some highly sustained dialogues, the prose parts convey the tone of ordinary conversation or narrative, and to any person daily accustomed to speak the language of the country, there is little more than the trouble of writing down the meaning.

Sufficient aids exist, even in Europe, for the elucidation of *prose* compositions; but until a dictionary of Chinese poetry (at present a great want) shall have been compiled, the subject must be considered as almost out of the reach of European scholars. The frequent and remote allusions, which in some measure constitute the beauty of their poetry, are hardly to be seized by those who are unacquainted with the most popular tales, traditions, or fancies of the Chinese, and, at the same time, unsupplied with all the means of original information. It is therefore, perhaps, unfortunate that Professor Remusat, of Paris, should have chosen for translation the novel of Yu-keaoule, (or, as he writes it, Iu-kiao-li,) which is full

of verse. To notice a single instance at the commencement of the Fourteenth Chapter, he has mistaken the name of the fair and imprudent damsel Wunkeun (in allusion to one of the commonest stories in China,* and bearing an evident reference to the subject of the chapter) for the title of some male personage. Instead of giving the proper name, he translates the two words that compose it, and renders the same by “the Prince of letters;” a character and a sex the most unsuited to the runaway fair one, whom he, for the first time, dignifies with such a title. There is, however, nothing surprising in this,—and other instances might be noted, were it a gracious task to find fault, and were Chinese criticism likely to interest English readers. But it is singular that M. Remusat should have misunderstood the meaning of lines so simple as the following:

不是才名動天下
如何到處有逢迎

‘ Mais ce n’est pas le mérite et la renommée qui remuent le monde,

‘ Est-il bon de recevoir ainsi l’hospitalité en tous lieux?’

The very opposite is the sense of the original:

‘ If

* See note to Appendix, vol. ii. p. 251, *et passim*.

- ‘ If talent and reputation did not move (or affect) the whole empire,
- ‘ How could he every where have met with such a reception ?’

There is much greater satisfaction, however, in bearing testimony to the more general correctness of the translation from the prose. In effective knowledge of the language, M. Remusat seems to be without a rival in France; and his tone and language, in speaking of his own works, or those of others, entitle his observations to respect. He does not, with an absurd and blind fury (the motive of which is obvious) decry those advantages which are inseparable from a residence in China itself:—advantages which have enabled Dr. Morrison to achieve his dictionary, that colossal labour of utility, which is an honour at once to himself and to his country,—and which has met with its due praise from competent judges. It is of the author of this dictionary that M. Klaproth, after declaring that the book is “*very troublesome in use,*” and “*full of faults,*” adds the following extraordinary observation:—“*If, indeed, he is really the author of the work which he has published.*”—But Dr. Morrison knows perfectly well how to estimate M. Klaproth’s remarks.

Such

Such attacks might well remain unnoticed ; and the translator himself has accordingly treated with invariable disregard the liberal observations and inuendos with which M. Klaproth (in his own peculiar style and language) has long thought it necessary to favour him—more especially as M. de Sorsum and M. Remusat deemed it worth their while to edit in French those very translations * (trifles as they were) which excited our critic's irritability. But the resolution of the committee to reprint the Chinese tragedy in octavo at the end of the romance, affords him a convenient opportunity (without which he should have been silent) to notice briefly some extracts which he has read from M. Klaproth's observations upon that drama, and in so doing he craves the reader's pardon for being dull. Our critic finds fault with the name *Hanchenyu* ; but had he a practical acquaintance with the people, he would have known that *Hanchenyu* and *Chenyu* are the appellations which the Chinese, (who are not fond of more than three syllables in a proper name) constantly apply to that person in their frequent repetitions of the story, whether in drawings,

* Concerning one of these M. Remusat observed, ' M. Davis, en le publiant, a donc rendu un véritable service aux amis de la littérature Asiatique.'

drawings, conversation, poetry, or prose. He seems to be unaware that they usually make use of a single syllable of foreign names, with the addition of some adjunct; and that, could he speak enough of the language to talk to a Chinese about *Hoo-han-ye-chen-yu*, he would not be much more intelligible than the lady who affects to be dumb in a certain well-known French comedy. It may seem tedious to dwell on such a subject;—but the translation itself disproves the insinuation, that the translator took the first syllable of the Tartar name “dans le sens de *s'appeler*.” It says, “I *am* Han-chenyu,” not “I am *called*,” &c. The heroine Chaoukeun is also called *Mingfei* and *Wong-tseang*; but this would have been a miserable reason for lumbering our version with a string of harsh-sounding words, tending only to produce confusion, and revolt the reader: and whatever anachronisms (of little consequence in a work of imagination) the original may contain, the translation is quite in accordance with the popular Chinese version of the story. The only real oversight, in the case of Wei-keang, has been corrected in the present edition.

M. Klaproth has contrived to enliven so dull a topic by a little entertainment. “M. Davis traduit, *I met a maiden, daughter of one Wong-chang,*

chang, ‘J’ai trouvé une demoiselle, fille d’UN Wang tchhang.’ Mais Wang tchhang n’est pas *un titre* ; c’est le nom propre, &c.” Our critic may well be excused if he is not ONE perfect English scholar ; but he should at least be able to understand what he pretends to condemn.

A real master of Chinese literature has pronounced, that “the dramatic works of the Chinese are certainly less calculated, on the whole, than their novels, to reward the labour of the translator.”* So much has been given of the Sorrows of Hān, as appeared likely to be read or endured. It was thought that a plain and sufficient reason had been advanced for inserting only *some* of the operatic passages, of which père Premare, in his version of the “Orphan of Chaou,” had before given *none*. M. Klaproth, however, hints as usual that this was (*peut-être*) because the translator did not understand them. Be it so ;—but what curious reason will he next discover for so opposite a course, as the insertion of a double version, metrical and literal, of *all* the poetry in the ROMANCE ?

* Sir George Staunton.

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THE
FORTUNATE UNION.

CHAPTER I.

THE HERO VISITS PEKING, AND TAKES PITY ON A
LOVER IN DISTRESS.

Though broad th' expanse of earth, of hill and stream,
Beneath yon broader heaven—though countless years
Still follow years gone by—as rolls the tide
Of human life in endless ebb, how few
The worthies of our race !

* * * * *

Asleep or wake, one object all absorbs
His mind—he yields to passion's force, and feels
Beauty's* soft sway—and did not adverse fate
Still thwart his hopes, their union were complete !

It is related that there lived during a former dynasty, in the city of Taming,† a young student, whose family name, with the addition of his personal appellation, was Teihchungyu, and his adopted title Tingseng. The features of this youth were so regular and perfect, as to resemble those of some beautiful woman, and

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B

gained

* In the original, the phrase “arched eyebrows,” is a poetical term for female beauty.

† One of the principal cities of the chief province, in which Peking the capital, is situated.

gained for him, among his neighbours and acquaintance, the nickname of the "fair lady." An exterior thus graceful and pleasing might properly have been matched by a soft and yielding disposition; while that of Teihchungyu,* on the contrary, partook of the rigid inflexibility of iron itself. His impetuous and ardent temper readily betrayed him into acts of intemperate violence: nor was it an easy matter to appease him when once irritated. Some deemed it strange, that in his social dealings with the world, he would meet the rich and great with studied coldness and formality, and readily take offence at the slightest omission on their parts; while on the other hand, did he chance to fall in with any of his poor and humble acquaintance, he would regale them with wine, and entertain them by his conversation, passing the whole day in friendly intercourse, without either fatigue or distaste. He possessed, however, one very good quality: for when people in real distress applied to him, he relieved them at once, without regard to their rank or other pretensions; but as for those flatterers, who came merely to humour him with a view to exciting his favour, he would pretend not to hear them. Thus it proved, that while many were justly grateful to him for his benefits, none ever ventured to approach him without having some good title to his bounty.

His

* An allusion to the word *Teih*, signifying iron: most of the names in Chinese fictions have a reference to the characters of those who bear them.

His father, named Teihying, was of the highest literary order, a man of an upright and straightforward temper, who held a place in the Censorate, and was celebrated for his boldness in giving advice to the sovereign. The mother of Teihchungyu accompanied her husband to his office at court; but their son, because of his violent disposition, and the consequent chance of its involving them in trouble, was left at the family house in his native city. Possessed of great natural endowments, our hero made a proportionate progress in learning, and soon became superior to the generality of persons of his own age and rank. He passed his whole time in retirement, amusing himself with books, and indulging his taste for pleasure, not without wine, amidst flowers and willow groves, hills and streams.

He had reached the age of fifteen or sixteen, when his father and mother determined on chusing him a wife: but the youth himself urged objections. "I am naturally hard to please," said he; "the choice of a spouse is very different from that of a mere friend, who may be got rid of if he does not suit you; but once married, the union is for life, and should the selection prove to be a bad one, there is not much difference between the two evils of living together, or being divorced. On this account, I entreat that you will allow a little more time in a matter of such consequence." As there was reason in what he said, they complied with his wishes.

Thus it happened that he attained to nearly twenty years of age without marrying, or even thinking of marriage. About this time, as he was one day reading, and drinking in the intervals, he came suddenly upon the history of Peka,* who fell a victim to the honesty with which he reproved his sovereign. "Such fidelity," thought the youth to himself, "is doubtless a noble virtue in a minister; yet, to deserve the highest praise, he should be able to preserve himself from destruction, at the same time that he arouses his master to a sense of his errors. Let the fervency of his zeal lead him to disregard consequences, he not only fails in his object, but provokes at once his sovereign's fury, and completes his own ruin; and when it comes to this, where is the use of his fidelity?"†

Having

* The last emperor of the *Shang* dynasty had a wife, famed for her sensuality, as well as for her influence over her husband. Various stories are related of the cruelty of this pair, whose vices had at length the natural effect of provoking rebellion among their subjects. One of the emperor's relations having ventured to reprove him, escaped the consequences of his temerity by counterfeiting madness: another, whose name was Peka, was not so wise, or so fortunate. The cruel monarch ordered his heart to be taken out and brought to him for inspection, observing, with an inhuman jest, that he wished to know if the heart of a sage differed from those of other men. The tyrant was dethroned by Woowong, the founder of the next race. When reduced to despair, he arrayed himself in his splendour, and mounting a funeral pile, burnt himself to death like Sardanapalus. The Chinese annals place him 1130 years B. C.

† Tacitus more than once expresses a like sentiment: 'Obsequiumque ac modestiam, si industria ac vigor adsint, eo laudis excedere, quo plerique per abrupta, sed in nullum reipublicæ usum, ambitiosâ morte inclauerunt.'—Vit. Agr. c. 42.

Having refreshed himself with another cup or two, Teihchungyu considered that his father was in a situation which exposed him to similar dangers, while the unbending disposition, for which he was so well known, was only the more likely to involve him in a similar fate. He became extremely uneasy on the subject, and began to wish himself at the capital, that he might assist his father with his advice. After passing a restless night, distracted and irresolute amidst a variety of projects, he rose with daylight the next morning, and giving the household in charge to a careful old domestic, ordered his horse and travelling furniture* to be prepared. Then desiring only his trusty attendant, Seaoutan, to follow him, he set out on a journey to Peking to see his father and mother.

Strong is the sovereign's claim, e'en unto death,
On his good subjects' service—nor less strong
The claims primeval of paternity!
Unnumber'd though the social links that bind
Man to his fellow man, none may compete
With the *five chief relations*.†

Teihchungyu travelled with all haste towards the capital : and at the expiration of two days, his anxiety to proceed occasioned his finding himself, on the approach of night, far from any regular resting-place, so
that

* This generally consists of a quilt or mat to lie upon, and a hard pillow. The Chinese do not incommode themselves with a superfluity of baggage, and used to express their surprise at the large quantity belonging to the embassy of 1816.

† *Viz.* prince and subject, father and son, husband and wife, brothers among themselves, and friends reciprocally.

that he was obliged to strike into a path leading to a scattered village, where, indisposed to lose time in selecting a lodging, he dismounted at the door of the first house he came to. His boy was desired to hold the horse, while he went in and called. An old woman presently came out, and observing his scholar's dress, said, "I suppose, sir," you come from Peking to see the young student Weipei, and would have me shew you his house?" He told her that he knew no such person, but had lost his way, and was in search of a bed for the night. "Then sir," replied the woman, "you are welcome to what we can give you; but we are poor people, and you must excuse an indifferent lodging." He said that he should be glad of any thing she could let him have until the morning: so the boy was desired to bring in the travelling furniture, while the old woman found a shed for the horse, and shewing her guest into a little side-room, brought him some tea to drink.

After refreshing himself, Teihchungyu inquired of his hostess, what had made her so curious about the object of his coming to the village, and who that student might be, of whom she had spoken? "You seem to be ignorant, sir," replied the woman, "that this place was not originally called *Weitsun*,* but that many years since an inhabitant of that name attained to high honours, and his family became so numerous
and

* The hamlet of Wei.

and flourishing, as to occupy the greater part of the neighbourhood and give their own name to it. They soon afterwards declined, and their wealth and numbers gradually diminished, until they were reduced to the meanest condition. Their fortune, however, at length took another turn, and one of the family, after reaching the age of sixteen or seventeen, attained to the rank of Bachelor in Letters. He chanced at Peking to become acquainted with a scholar of the same degree, who conceiving an affection for him on account of his youth and early attainments, contracted him to his own daughter. Their poverty was the occasion of the marriage being delayed for some years, and in the mean while a rich and powerful lord, happening to observe the beauty of the intended bride, was determined to obtain possession of her. The parents would on no account give their consent, and the great man, enraged thereat, made such a bad use of his power as to send a number of people to seize the lady and carry her off by force. Some person came hither to acquaint the student with his misfortune, and he hurried to Peking to make inquiries, but could learn no tidings of either his wife or her relations. He would then have presented a complaint, but could procure no witnesses to back him ; besides which, his enemy was so powerful, that there seemed little chance of obtaining redress. This morning he returned home in despair, and after recounting his griefs to his mother, went out, as she apprehended, to drown himself. She flew to all
her

her neighbours, and to my husband among the rest, entreating them to pursue him and prevent his intentions ; but I know not if they have succeeded. Thus, sir, I was led to suppose on your arrival that you might be a friend come to see him."

She had hardly done speaking, when they heard a confused sound of voices in the road, and coming out of the house, perceived a number of people surrounding a young man in the dress of a student, who covered his face and wept. The old woman called out to her husband in the crowd to return home, telling him there was a guest in the house. Upon this he immediately left the throng, and perceiving Teihchungyu, asked his wife if that young gentleman was their guest ?

" Yes," replied she, " he has lost his way, and wants a lodging for the night."

" If so," said the other, " why don't you go and prepare supper, instead of staring about here ?"

" I was acquainting this gentleman," replied the old woman, " with the history of the young student, and as you are present, can you inform us how it happened that he could discover no traces of his bride, although she was carried off in broad daylight by such a number of persons ?"

" There were plenty who could have informed him," replied the villager ; " but his enemy is a powerful courtier, and few persons would be so rash as to incur danger by mentioning what did not concern them ;

them ; however," continued he, " though they had related every thing, it would have been of little use to the young gentleman."

" Alas, alas !" exclaimed the old woman, " I fear that his misfortunes will kill him !" and so saying she went into the house to prepare supper.

" How timorous and spiritless are you country people !" said Teihchungyu, smiling,— " though I cannot help thinking you must be mistaken on this subject, and talk at random."

The old man assured him that he himself, at least, was well-informed, and being asked where he got his information, replied, " Sir, you seem to be a stranger, quite unconnected with this affair,—I have therefore no objection to mentioning it before you: but let me ask, where would you suppose that the young lady had been concealed ?"

" She must be lodged in the female apartments of the noble* who carried her off," said Teihchungyu.

" That can hardly be the case," replied the other, " since there is always somebody going in and out, and it would be difficult to keep the matter a secret ; but they say that the emperor for some particular deserts bestowed on him a palace of retirement, sacred from

* It has been very ignorantly asserted, that the Chinese possess nothing like hereditary nobility. There are five grades of these (besides the descendants of Confucius), who enjoy hereditary rank to all intents and purposes : though official rank in China is certainly of more consequence than that derived from mere descent.

from all intrusion, wherein he might dwell and enjoy himself. A nephew of mine, who went to the city to sell forage, saw the young lady seized, and carried to this place."

"What then prevented his immediately acquainting the young man," said our hero, "that he might go and procure the liberation of his bride?"

"It was useless," replied the villager, "for I myself spoke to him very earnestly, but he despaired of doing any good." Being asked if he knew where this palace was situated, "Yes," continued he; "it is not much more than half a mile from one of the city gates; the place is well known to every one, but none dare enter it." By this time the old woman came to say that supper was ready: and when Teihchungyu had satisfied his hunger, he desired his page to prepare a bed for him to sleep.

After breakfast in the morning, he told Seaoutan to weigh out half a tael of silver for their host. The latter, as Teihchungyu was mounting his horse to depart, cautioned him, for fear of mischief, not to say a word at Peking of what had passed between them on the preceding evening. The youth desired him to set his mind at ease, for he should hardly talk of what did not concern him: and so taking leave of the old man, he soon found himself on the high road to the capital.

Vain are the crafty villain's wiles, most vain
Often, when vaunted most—disgrace, defeat,
Rush headlong in from quarters little fear'd!

Hearken

Hearken to counsel, friend, and when secure
You deem yourself from mortals' purblind eyes,
Think there's a heaven above, that surveys all!

Scarcely had he proceeded a mile on the journey, when he perceived at a short distance before him the young student, weeping aloud, and with every outward token of despair calling on heaven, and complaining of his fate. Teihchungyu no sooner discovered who he was, than he made all haste to gallop up, and dismounting from his horse, clapped him on the shoulder. "Friend," said he, "do not yield to despair,—your difficulties are not insuperable: I will use my endeavours, and feel confident of having your fair mistress restored to you."

The student looked up with surprise, and perceiving the stranger's imposing exterior, "Alas! sir," cried he, "I am but poor and mean, undeserving of the notice of such a person as yourself. I cannot guess how you should have learned who I am. Your kind consolations are entitled to my warmest thanks; but these misfortunes seem to be a judgment from heaven, and allowing you to be possessed of superhuman power, I fear you can do me no good!"

Our hero laughed, and exclaimed, "It is the mere sting of a bee! if I do not set it all to rights, you shall be at liberty to say that the age of achievements is past."

"Sir," said the other with increased surprise, "I fear the intensity of my grief has impaired my understanding,

standing, and I may have spoken disrespectfully in doubting the ability of one who now appears to me possessed of extraordinary goodness and power. But let me beg your name and title, that I may know and remember to whom I stand so much indebted."

"I will not tell you that just now," said the youth, "but pray let me know your own particular designation, and what your present plans are; for it is necessary that I should be informed."

The other acquainted him with his designation, and then added, "I should have been driven by my misery to seek death, had it not been for two reflections: first, that my mother must in such a case be left childless; secondly, that under the government, and almost in the presence of so divine an emperor, it seemed impossible that the wicked noble who robbed me of my betrothed wife could be allowed to persist in his violence and injustice. Last night, after some irresolution, I wrote a statement of my case, and was just now on my road to Peking, where, indifferent to my fate, I would have gone to all the various tribunals, and accused my enemy. I knew that his rank and opulence made him a very unequal opponent to myself, but the business had arrived at such a pitch as to put these considerations out of the question."

He then drew the document from his sleeve, and still weeping, requested Teihchungyu to peruse it, and judge of the extremity of his hardship. The youth

youth read the paper, and found that his father-in-law, named Hanyuen, was a scholar of the same degree with the student himself, and that the ravisher was Takwae, a noble of high rank. "Very well," said he to the other; "this statement is clear and well drawn up; but to be effectual, it must be submitted to the emperor's own inspection; if taken to the tribunals, the different officers will support each other; if you present it yourself to his majesty, that too will prove unavailing; but entrust it to my care, and I may perhaps find out a way to assist you."

The student bowed low. "Sir, your kindness towards me is like the influence of Spring on a dying tree.* But it is not fit that I remain idle while you are labouring for me—let me follow your horse's steps to Peking, where I shall be ready to obey your commands."

"No," said Teihchungyu, "were you to go with me, it might excite attention, and place your enemies on their guard; you had better return home, and in ten days hence, if I have any good news to communicate, you shall hear it."

"Your goodness, sir," replied the other, "surpasses the

* In Cowper's beautiful address to Yardley Oak, we have the same idea :

"Yet life still lingers in thee, and puts forth
Proof not contemptible of what she can,
Even where death predominates. The Spring
Finds thee not less alive to her sweet force," &c.

the heavens and the earth ! But alas, you labour in vain for an ill-fated wretch like myself !” and with that his tears began to flow afresh.

“ What is there in the whole world,” exclaimed Teihchungyu, “ that a young man like yourself need despair of accomplishing ? Take heart, then, and cease this childish mood.”

The student thanked him gratefully, and our hero, putting the paper into his sleeve, and bidding the other a hasty adieu, mounted his horse and proceeded with his attendant towards the capital. The young man, overwhelmed with conflicting emotions, stood by the way-side and followed him with his eyes. The whole appeared like a dream, which he hardly dared to think was true, and yet would not willingly believe to be false. In this state he lingered until Teihchungyu and his horse vanished from his sight : and then, turning round, walked pensively towards his home.

No resting-place the troubled bosom finds,
Th’ embitter’d soul in sighs must seek relief.
Say not, that tears to women’s softer mood,
Or babes alone pertain—by grief opprest,
The sternest oft will weep.

The village was not above twelve or fifteen miles from Peking, and our hero travelled with such expedition as to arrive there by noon. He resolved to take the statement directly to his father, and consult with him on petitioning the emperor for a warrant to proceed against Takwae. On arriving at the private
door

door of his father's house he observed, to his great surprise and concern, that not a single attendant was to be seen. Wondering what could be the matter, he dismounted in haste and entered the hall of audience, where none of the clerks or other officers were in waiting. Still more alarmed by these appearances, he hurried towards the inner apartments, which he found shut. He then called aloud to the people within, who instantly recognised his voice, and opening the doors, exclaimed as they met him : " Alas ! sir, things have gone very ill ; my lord has offended the emperor by an address, and just been thrown into prison !" They added, that he had come most opportunely, and urged his going immediately to consult with his mother.

Teihchungyu asked with the greatest surprise what this address could be ; and without waiting for an answer, walked straight into the room where his mother was sitting. As soon as the latter saw him she caught hold of his sleeve, and exclaimed with tears, " My son, it is well that you are here ! Your father, in his anxious solicitude to perform the part of a faithful minister, was constantly presenting memorials ; and a misfortune has at length befallen him, which puts his life in some danger."

The young man was much alarmed by this intelligence ; but seeing his mother in such distress, he could not but endeavour to offer her some consolation : so kneeling down, he entreated her to be composed :

" Though

“ Though this affair were as arduous as the heavens,” said he, “ we might still find out a remedy ; tell me then, mother, what was the petition, and in what manner worded, thus fearfully to provoke the anger of the emperor ?”

The lady raised him, and desiring that he would sit down by her side, proceeded to relate as follows. “ Your father was returning from the audience a few days since, when he was stopped half way by an old man and his wife, who with dishevelled hair and torn garments stood before his horse’s head, and cried out for justice. Being asked who they were, and what was the matter, the old man stated that he was a scholar, named Hanyuen, and that his daughter being already affianced, but not yet married, a powerful noble had heard of her beauty, and sent a peremptory message to demand her as his mistress. The father replied, that pledges had already passed between the betrothed, and that he would rather die than give his assent to such a proposal ; adding at the same time some other expressions which exasperated the great man, who then made a vile use of his power, and sent a number of the wretches* in his pay to enter the house by force, and carry off the daughter. The father pursued and endeavoured to prevent them ; but in so doing only exposed himself to be beaten and maltreated in a shocking manner. Your father was much moved by

* Literally ‘ vultures and dogs.’

by this detail of the outrage, and presently addressed a petition to the emperor, praying him to degrade and punish the ravisher. Had your father proceeded with due caution, he would, at the same time that he presented the address, have secured Hanyuen and his wife as witnesses: but exasperated feelings unhappily deprived him of his usual foresight. When his majesty's order was issued to the Criminal tribunal to subject the offender to trial and punishment, that wicked noble, being possessed of abundant wealth and resources, contrived to place the old man and his wife out of the way, and to secrete their daughter beyond the reach of inquiry; so that when the trial came on, there were no prosecutors. He then presented a memorial to the emperor, accusing your father of slandering a faithful minister and deceiving his sovereign, winning over at the same time to his cause the judges of the tribunal, who advised his majesty that your father should be degraded and punished. The emperor was highly offended, and issued an order for his imprisonment; and though some of his powerful friends would gladly have exerted themselves to save him, yet the want of accusers and witnesses in this case made it impossible—and alas! I fear that the worst still remains behind.”

On hearing his mother's story, Teihchungyu felt perfectly relieved, and told her that she might set her mind at rest. “Any matter connected with the palace,”

observed he, "might have proved very serious: but as for Takwae, and his seizure of the scholar's daughter, 'tis but a trifle."

"That may be true," said the lady; "but still the parties are not forthcoming, and it amounts in appearance to the crime of deceiving the emperor."

"Had my father," replied he, "made use of false names and fictitious circumstances to implicate Takwae, such would have been the complexion of his offence; but Hanyuen is a person of literary rank, and his daughter being carried off in the sight of great numbers, it was nothing more than the duty of my father's office to take notice of the affair—much less a crime against his sovereign."

Finding that his mother still despaired of discovering the secreted parties, Teihchungyu observed, "that when robbers and malefactors, in spite of their various tricks and disguises, were discovered in the remotest districts, what difficulty could there be in finding this scholar and his family, who, oppressed and maltreated as they had been, were shut up within the very precincts of the court? Besides," added he, "I myself have all the necessary information respecting them."

His mother appeared scarcely to believe this: upon which he asked her reproachfully if she thought him capable of deceit? "Then," exclaimed she, with joy, "if such be really the case, hasten, as soon as you have refreshed yourself, to your father in prison, impart to him

him this intelligence, and put an end to his sorrow." So saying, the lady desired her attendants to prepare a repast for her son, and causing him to change his travelling dress, gave orders that a sufficient number of persons might be ready to attend him to the prison.

Teihchungyu, however, paused, and told them not to be in a hurry. He went into the library, and wrote out an address to the emperor; then requesting his mother to give him the seals of his father's office, he put the whole up, together with the young student's memorial, into his sleeve, and calling for his servants, proceeded towards the prison to visit his father.

'Tis fortitude's proud attribute and boast
In time of trial to be self-possessed:
—When danger threatens, mind is most requir'd!
Did mere brute rage usurp the honours due
To nobler courage, long might *this* remain
Robb'd of its proper meed!

When Teihchungyu arrived at the prison, the officer in charge of it knew who he was, and received him with civility. "Your father is within," said he, leading him towards the interior, "you can go in and see him; and as you may wish for some private conversation I will not accompany you."

The youth thanked him, and entered the apartment, where he saw his father sitting up in a dignified manner, unencumbered with fetters. Having paid the customary respect, "Sir," said he, "I have been guilty

of great negligence in not coming sooner to wait upon and assist you."

The censor arose from his seat with surprise, and said, "I am here, in my proper character, as a faithful minister—what is the reason that I see you in this place, at a time when you should be attending to your studies at home?"

"I heard," replied his son, "that your loyalty had involved you in trouble: how was it possible for me to remain at a distance?"

Teihying paused.—"Your coming," said he, "was certainly an act of duty—I perceived there were abuses, and deemed it right to speak my mind: but whether I be listened to or not—whether I live or die—must remain with the emperor, and your presence can do me no good whatever."

"Sir," replied Teihchungyu, "it is doubtless the business of your station to speak your mind: but it is prudent, at the same time, to select occasions, when remonstrance may be attended with effect. Those who without regarding such opportunities, satisfy themselves with the mere boldness of their interference, are like the inconsiderate mortals who, continually chasing the wind and catching at shadows, think to get themselves a name by the mere loudness of their outcries. Do such deserve the name of faithful and useful ministers, or is this the object of his majesty in instituting their office?"

"When

“When I reported the affair,” said Teihying sighing, “I had every reason to suppose there was sufficient evidence; nor was it possible to foresee the wiles which have been practised by that villain. When Hanyuen and his wife openly called on me for protection, I represented their case; and it was equally impossible to divine that when the Criminal tribunal had received orders to apprehend all persons concerned, the chief accusers should be secreted out of the reach of inquiry;—thus throwing all the responsibility on myself. Events have turned out in direct variance with my expectations: I may, therefore, be acquitted of the charge of ‘persecuting the wind and catching at shadows,’ no less than of a wish to deceive my sovereign.”

“It is true,” observed his son, “that we cannot foresee every contingency; but we should adopt all the precautions in our power. Instead, however, of dwelling on what is past, let us consult on a remedy for the evil, lest a further delay produce further mischief. As long as there is hope, sir, why should you lose your time in inactivity, while your enemies are plotting against you?”

“If I remain inactive, it proceeds from necessity; where can be the utility of exerting myself, as long as I have no means of tracing those people?”

“There are traces enough of them,” said Teihchungyu, “but the Criminal tribunal favour Takwae, and remain inactive. You, sir, should obtain the emperor’s express authority

authority to prosecute this case in person, and you will no doubt succeed."

"There would not be much difficulty in that," observed the censor;—"but if, after all, the people should not be discovered, it would only aggravate my own offence."

Teihchungyu then took occasion to inform him, that the place of concealment was known to himself; but as it was sacred from intrusion, the imperial permission must be obtained to enter it, and apprehend the parties.

His father grew impatient. "The Criminal court," exclaimed he, "have received orders in vain to find them; I myself have fruitlessly engaged the exertions of my friends in power; and do you, just arrived at the capital, pretend to know so much about it?—Go to, you are a prating, self-sufficient boy!"

Teihchungyu replied, that in a matter of life and death, it was quite impossible for him to be guilty of such levity; and then, looking round to see that nobody was within hearing, he recounted all that he had learned from the young student and the villager, presenting at the same time the student's memorial for his father's inspection.

Teihying was rejoiced at the perusal of the document. "This memorial," cried he, "will suffice to exculpate me, even though the people should not be discovered:—still, however, I cannot help suspecting that they are not secreted in that place."

His

His son observed, that as the palace was sacred from all intrusion, there could be no doubt whatever of its being the place of concealment.

“ But when Takwae found his case growing desperate, would he not effect the death of these people, with a view to making himself secure ?”

“ He is sufficiently bad,” answered Teihchungyu ;
“ but I believe him to be nothing worse than a debauched libertine, who has abused his rank and power :— it does not follow that he is a murderer to boot. Besides, his attachment to the young woman’s beauty would not let him give her up : and the security of his fortress, the connivance of the Criminal tribunal, and your being in prison, would all tend to make him feel secure. Think no more about that, sir, I beg.”

“ What you say is very true,” observed his father ;
“ and this is no time for scruples. Wait until I have written a petition, and in the meanwhile procure my seal from home, that I may present it directly.”

“ You need not take that trouble, sir,” answered the youth, “ for I have both the petition and the seal ready. If you approve this paper, it may go without any alteration.” So saying, he presented the writing to his father, who opened and perused it as follows :

“ The imprisoned Teihying, late inspector-general of Honan province, humbly addresses his imperial Majesty, to intreat that he may be furnished with authority for apprehending certain persons, and thereby clear himself

himself from imputed blame. To make use of the eyes and ears of his servants is the virtue of the sovereign : to offer up his poor advice is the duty of the minister. Hence a member of the Censorate is permitted to report what he hears, although such a representation, made without proof, has been the cause of my present disgrace.

“ When the hereditary noble Takwae in open day carried off the daughter of the scholar Hanyuen, already betrothed, and thus offended against morality* and the ritual laws, I besought your Majesty to command that the Criminal tribunal should try that noble, with a view to vindicate the ritual laws and the cause of morality ; but the wicked culprit, with diabolical artifice, secreted the complainant, that he might deceive heaven† (your Majesty), while the Criminal tribunal through improper motives connived at and favoured him, and converted me, your Majesty’s adviser, into the guilty party. In the simpleness of my integrity, I could derive no profit from corruption : heaven† well knows the purity of my intentions : and it now only remains that I intreat my sacred master, in compassion to his servant who has suffered wrong, to issue an order, authorizing me to apprehend

* *Mingheaou*, ‘ the famous doctrine ’ of Confucius—a system of moral philosophy, *Lefä*, ‘ the ritual laws,’—of equal consequence among the Chinese.

† Here the word *t’hëen*, ‘ heaven,’ is used in almost the same sentence with two different meanings ; first, as the emperor—secondly, in its usual sense. This may serve to shew the idea which the Chinese entertain of their sovereign !

prehend the parties myself. Should the order arrive in the morning, and I fail to produce them before night, I will cheerfully await the severest punishment; but should they be forthcoming, then the discovery of their secretion will be a sufficient proof of the guilt and innocence of the respective parties. In the event of your Majesty's gracious command being issued, I intreat that it may be secret, to prevent Takwae again shifting the hiding-place—and that there may be no restriction to the extent of search, in order to complete the elucidation of the facts. With the greatest anxiety I await your Majesty's pleasure. Appended to this is the statement of the young scholar himself, in further evidence."

Teihying was much pleased with the address, which he pronounced to be clear and well written, and so agreeable with his own wishes, as to require no alteration. He folded it up, and delivered it to the governor of the prison, who received his directions to forward it to the proper office for receiving memorials. But to learn the result—to see the cage of jasper* broken, and the golden lock destroyed, let the reader proceed to the following chapter.

* This alludes to a familiar poetical couplet, which may be thus rendered:—

"The cage of jasper broken, the variegated phoenix flew out,
The golden lock destroyed, the dragon regained his liberty."

CHAPTER II.

“ THE ATTACK ON THE TIGER’S DEN, AND THE SKILFUL
RECOVERY OF THE PRIZE.”

Occasions rise, when forms and rules prescrib’d
Must to a straighter course of action yield :
He,* whom the sculptur’d column could not blind,
Got praise—not so the over-scrupulous fool :
Search for the hare amidst her likeliest haunts,
And from the birds of prey a lesson learn
In seizing her—’twas thus our hero won
His prize ; and bravely scorning vulgar forms,
Fashion’d his conduct as the case demanded.

IN less than two days after the Censor had, in concurrence with his son’s advice, presented the petition to the emperor, a secret reply came from his majesty to the prison. Teihying opened it in private, and found that it granted his request, and gave him authority to apprehend the ravisher. Much rejoiced at this, he proceeded to erect a table of incense, and to offer

* Allusion to the stories of Leying and Changknëen. The first of these, being in search of a female who had been forcibly carried off, ransacked in vain the mansion of her ravisher, until, suspecting that the wooden columns of the house might from their size be capable of concealing the object of his pursuit, he ordered them to be cut open, and in that manner discovered her. The second, being in virtue of his office about to apprehend a criminal of high rank, was so unadvised as to precede his visit to the house of the guilty person by the transmission of a ceremonial ticket, which had the effect of warning his victim of the danger, and causing his escape.

offer up thanks in front of the imperial order;* then carefully folding up the despatch, lest it should be seen, he began to consider what was best to be done.

“The emperor’s permission,” thought he, “is obtained; but should I be so unfortunate as to fail in apprehending the parties, I shall be in a dilemma.” He consulted his son, and was for setting out forthwith.

“Softly, sir,” said the youth;—“if you leave the prison at once, it will excite attention, and place our enemy on his guard. Wait here a while: let me precede you quietly, and break into his house; then when I have rescued the young woman and her parents, I will give you notice, that you may hasten thither on horseback, and proclaim the imperial order: this will be the safest course.” His father nodded assent; and charging secrecy on the officer of the prison, gave directions to his son to proceed with great caution.

Teihchungyu going straight home, informed his mother of the circumstances, and inquired for his brazen mace, weighing between twenty and thirty pounds, which he had formerly as a boy provided for his own exercise and amusement, being skilful in the use of his weapons, and robust withal. When called to Peking, his father had been apprehensive
lest

* This is an indispensable ceremony, on receiving any writing from the emperor.

lest this weapon might be productive of mischief, and directed that his son should be deprived of it. The lady was therefore startled by his application at this time, and demanded with surprise for what purpose he required it?

"I am going," replied he, "to explore the tiger's den: and how shall I defend myself without arms?"

Persuaded he was right, she gave directions that it should be delivered to him, but with a caution that he used it only defensively. The youth then privately ordered that from ten to twenty active attendants should follow at a distance, and be ready at his need. He next called for wine, and refreshed himself; then putting on a military garb, in which he looked like some god, he took his brazen mace, and throwing an ordinary dress over all, mounted his white horse, being accompanied by a single attendant, and issued forth at the city gate without being remarked by any one.

On reaching the open road he gave his horse the rein, and soon observed, at some distance on the left hand, a very magnificent mansion, which he knew must be the place. He dismounted at once, and desiring his boy to hold the horse, proceeded cautiously to reconnoitre the premises. On either side of the entrance was erected an inscription* to the honour

* These are given in the original, consisting of four words each, and constituting one of those *parallelisms* of which the Chinese are so fond, but

honour of the noble inhabitant; and between them stood a triple portal of lofty dimensions, with this notification in golden letters on high: THE PALACE OF RETIREMENT; CONFERRED BY HIS MAJESTY THE EMPEROR. All three of the gates were fast shut.*

Seeing that he could not enter here, Teihchungyu bethought him that there must be a private door elsewhere; so following the course of a high wall, and turning the corner into a side lane, he perceived, about midway, a small gate with red folding-doors, also closed, and secured with a great padlock. The nobleman's insignia, which had been pasted cross-wise over the doors, were torn and broken in consequence of these having been frequently opened; and on but which cannot always be rendered very intelligible in English. Literally they are:

“ Merit, reaching to the northern palace,

Dignity, subjecting the southern heaven !”

* Every considerable house, as well as every temple, has a gateway, consisting of one large folding-door in the centre, and a smaller one on either side. These last serve for ordinary occasions; while the first is thrown open for the reception of distinguished guests. The ornamental and honorary gateways in the middle of Chinese streets (sometimes improperly termed triumphal arches) are of a similar construction, though in these the doorways are never furnished with valvæ. Their beauty arises wholly from the painting and gilding, and not from the proportions, which are weak and flimsy. The roof, and what may be called the entablature, overweigh altogether the long and slender pillars beneath. As we refer the origin of columns in European architecture to the trunks of trees, tapering in proportion as they rise from the ground, so the Chinese pillars may be traced to the original use of the bamboo, which in its slender proportions, and nearly uniform diameter throughout the whole length, assimilates to their columns at present.

on looking through a crevice, he perceived that the bolts within were not fastened. On one side was pasted up this prohibition in large characters :

TAKE NOTICE, HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY HAS DECLARED THIS PLACE SACRED FROM INTRUSION ; NONE, WHATEVER BE THEIR CONDITION, MAY APPROACH OR LOOK IN, WITHOUT INCURRING THE SEVEREST PENALTIES.

Two lodges withinside were filled with attendants, placed there as a guard. The youth perceiving this, would not alarm them yet ; but returning to where his page led the horse, threw off his scholar's dress, and displayed the military garb underneath ; then, seizing his mace, he got on horseback, and gave directions to Seaoutan to call up the attendants, adding, that if any persons were apprehended, he must instantly fly to his lord (in prison) with the intelligence.

Teihchungyu then galloped back to the small gate, and jumping off his horse, cried out aloud, " I have the imperial order to see the nobleman Takwae ; go in instantly and announce me."

Four or five servants, in caps and dresses of ceremony, rushed out from the lodges, and in the midst of their confusion and alarm gave for answer, that " their lord was not there."

" Nonsense !" said the youth, with an exclamation of rage, " I know very well that he is. How dare ye, wretched slaves, act in opposition to the imperial order ? Be sure you shall all be seized and put

put to death." The fellows looked at each other, but were so frightened that they could return no answer;—while he cried out in a louder tone, to ask what they meant by not opening the gate?

An old domestic at last ventured to speak. "Who durst open it when our master is absent? Besides, were the gate open, you would not presume to enter, in opposition to the emperor's prohibition!"

"Not presume to enter with his majesty's express warrant?" cried Teihchungyu in a rage; but if you will not open the gate, I must;" so lifting up his mace, he knocked off the padlock and staple at one stroke, and the doors immediately flew open. He strode in with a lofty air; while the servants, frightened at his appearance, made no attempt to stop him; but ran into the house in a body, exclaiming against this forcible entry.

When Takwae, in the height of his pride and power, first took possession of the daughter of Hanyuen, he looked upon the latter as a poor scholar who could obtain no redress for the outrage, little expecting that the censor Teihying would become his accuser to the emperor. On his majesty ordering the Criminal tribunal to investigate the matter, he had nothing left but to seize Hanyuen and his wife, and secrete them in his palace, to prevent their giving evidence. Afraid at first of their being discovered even there, he would have changed their hiding-place; but finding that the Criminal

Criminal tribunal befriended him, and instead of prosecuting the affair, threw Teihying into prison, he became quite at ease, and gave himself no farther concern on that score. Still apprehensive, however, that the young lady might seek to put an end to herself, rather than consent to his wishes, and her father and mother continuing inexorable, he treated them all handsomely for a while; until, provoked by their obstinacy, he had that very day seated himself in his hall, and ordered Hanyuen to be stripped, bound, and brought before him, thinking that blows might have the effect of making him comply.

“Though you do possess literary rank,”* said he, addressing his prisoner, “I have you very safe in this place, and can put you to death if I chuse. How shall such a poor wretch as you find any redress?”

“You may murder me if you please,” replied Hanyuen, “but heaven is not to be insulted—nor the laws violated with impunity. You will have to repent your crime when it is too late; think a little, then, before you act.”

“You call on me to think,” exclaimed Takwae—why not consider a little for yourself. It certainly is no disgrace to a poor scholar to have a daughter in the family of a noble.† If you consent, you shall all of you be sumptuously clothed and fed, and well provided

* As a protection.

† That is, as a handmaid, not as his wife. See Preface.

provided for ; this will be a good deal better than your present state of poverty."

" I am a poor scholar," replied Hanyuen ; " but the adage says, ' better be honored among the little, than despised among the great.*' How shall a disciple of Confucius, from any sordid desire of wealth or luxury, disgrace the sacred religion of the emperor ?"

Takwae now grew enraged, and desired his servants to begin their work with him—when behold four or five of those at the gate came rushing in, exclaiming, " Alas ! my lord, a young man in a military dress, armed with a brazen mace, and proclaiming a warrant from the emperor, has, in defiance of our opposition, burst into the gate. We know not who he is ; but he will be here presently, and we come to put you on your guard."

Takwae became almost stupified with fright when he heard this, and looking wildly about, would have retreated into an inner room ; but Teihchungyu had already strode into the hall, and seeing him standing there, raised his hands and saluted him.

" My lord, I come on business from his majesty, and must speak with you. How is it that you oppose the imperial pleasure in refusing me admittance ?"

Seeing that escape was out of the question, Takwae was obliged to come forward. " If you bring his majesty's order," said he, " why had not I previous

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notice,

* Literally, ' Better precede a hen, than follow a cow.'

notice, that a table of incense might be prepared? —Why enter in this rude and boisterous manner?"

"The order was both secret and urgent," replied the youth, "and did not admit of being either divulged or delayed." Then advancing forward with his mace in his right hand, he seized fast hold of Takwae with his left. "I beg leave to ask, since this is a place conferred by the emperor for purposes of retirement and privacy, and *not* a court of justice, what poor man is this, whom you are stripping and beating?"

Conscious of his guilt in imprisoning the poor scholar, and hearing the imperial order so frequently repeated, Takwae became more and more frightened, and would gladly have made his escape: but, seized and detained as he was, it became necessary to put on a bold face. "These are my own domestics," said he, "under my own government; they have no concern with public justice." He then desired his people to take away the prisoner, under pretence of inquiring the imperial order; but Teihchungyu would not permit this; and Hanyuen cried aloud from the bottom of the hall, that "truly he was not a domestic of Takwae, but a poor scholar whom he had seized and imprisoned:" calling on the youth at the same time to save his life.

Teihchungyu felt rejoiced to hear that this was really

really Hanyuen; but affecting to be much astonished, "How came you to be concealed here," inquired he, "when the Criminal tribunal had an order to produce you?—This is a contempt of the emperor, and can hardly be expiated with life!"

The page had by this time come in, and his master made him a sign, which he presently understood. He ran out to summon the attendants in a body, and then galloped off to give information to the Censor in prison. The youth pointed out Hanyuen to his people, and told them to seize him, as he was the emperor's prisoner. "If you have been injured by Takwae," said he, addressing him, "what prevented your going for redress to the Criminal court, instead of lurking here, and conniving at his ill-conduct?"

The poor man began to weep. "When my daughter," replied he, "was seized by the wicked ravisher, I did all in my power to procure redress: I presumed not to conceal myself from the Criminal tribunal; but, poor and helpless as I am, was carried off by a number of his creatures, as a sheep is seized by a tiger. My wife and I were immured in this place, and daily threatened with punishment, unless we consented to his demands. Our death awaited us, when you, brave sir, came as if from heaven to our rescue, and restored us to the light. Believe me that you found us here in a pitfall, and with no consent of our own."

“It would seem, then, that your wife and daughter are both here?” said Teihchungyu.

“Indeed, sir, they are,” replied the other. “My unhappy wife is imprisoned in a back room; and my daughter, who I believe is confined in an upper story, looks daily to death as a refuge. I am even ignorant if she be dead or alive.”

This account excited the high indignation of Teihchungyu, who made a sign to his people to carry Hanyuen to the back of the house in search of his wife and daughter. Takwae perceived that all was lost; but, enraged at seeing the men going into his private rooms, he became careless of consequences, and loudly vociferated to Teihchungyu, that this sanctuary, conferred by his majesty, and his hereditary rank, entitled him to the judgment of the emperor. “What man are you,” cried he, “that dare thus armed to break into my doors on your own proper authority, and insult me thus grossly? Your own crime is sufficient to destroy you, without any interference with the concerns of others.” So saying, he endeavoured to grapple with the youth, but failing in that, called on his servants to apprehend him.

His whole household had assembled at the commencement of the affair to assist their lord; but seeing him in the hands of Teihchungyu, who was armed, and withal of a formidable aspect, they had not ventured to come forward. Thus called upon, however,

however, some of the boldest advanced to seize the young man, who exclaimed: "Wretched slaves! whom would you dare to touch?" Then seizing Takwae by the middle, he swayed him round, and at one sweep, sent all the fellows tumbling over one another. His prisoner, being advanced in age, and moreover weak and enervated by luxury, could ill bear this rough treatment. He became sick, dizzy, and out of breath, and could only just wave his hand and cry out to his people, "Be quiet! be quiet!"

Takwae had some friends, nobles like himself, who being informed of what was going on, came directly to the spot, and seeing their acquaintance in such an awkward situation began to remonstrate with Teihchungyu. "Sir," said they, "be pleased to control your resentment awhile, and let us talk over the matter with you; but do not use force, and violate the dignity of a noble."

"This fellow," exclaimed the youth, "is a wretch who has deceived his sovereign, and infringed the laws—death is no punishment for him: what nobility or dignity is there in the case?"

"If there be any thing wrong in his conduct," said they again, "it should be properly investigated; but this kind of treatment cannot be agreeable with the emperor's wish."

"What you say is sufficiently reasonable in itself," replied Teihchungyu, "but you are ignorant of the
circum-

circumstances: the atrocity of this man's conduct requires another mode of proceeding; the case is too urgent for the application of common rules."

"We are not acquainted," said they, "with the occasion which has called forth your prowess, and beg to ask whether you came hither to revenge some injury of your own, or to right some other person; when we know the facts, we shall be able to judge."

"I came for neither of those purposes," answered he, "but with the emperor's private order to apprehend criminals."

"Why not let us hear it read?" cried the others, "to remove all doubts?"

"That may readily be done," replied the youth; "let an altar of incense be quickly prepared."

Directions being given for this purpose, Takwae, who had in the mean while recovered his breath, observing that his partisans were numerous, began to assume courage. "Friends," exclaimed he, "do not listen to his nonsensical speeches; he is neither an authorized officer, nor any minister of the emperor: what pretensions has he to the imperial warrant? It is some associate of Hanyuen, who puts on this brave appearance to impose on us. Having impudently broken into this sanctuary, and assaulted a noble, his crime is too great to admit of his escaping us. I call on you to assist me. Send for the two magis-

magistrates of the district ; tell them that a murderer has broken into my house in open day, and if they do not come to my assistance, they shall hear of it to-morrow."

His friends now began to think this was all true, and turning to Teihchungyu, "Such exploits as yours," said they, "might succeed in the dark on some poor man in a remote village ; but here, and in broad daylight, it could hardly be expected. Where is the warrant for this violence—let it be read : if you cannot produce it, your crime is indeed heavy ! You had better tell us your name, and the whole truth. Submit, and we may still do something for you ; but if you think to escape us, you will scarcely succeed, even with wings."

Teihchungyu smiled at this. "What is there to prevent my going away now, if I pleased ?" said he : "it will be time enough to go when the warrant is read, and the prisoners are secured."

"Then let it be read instantly," exclaimed the others.

"I am alone," said the youth, "and he has his friends on the spot : he will pervert the meaning, and I shall lose my labour : wait, then, until the magistrates arrive."

The others agreed that this was a fair arrangement, and a messenger being sent to hasten the magistrates,* they soon arrived, separately. When informed of the business,

* The Chefoo and Chehëen.

business, the superior officer replied that they must first see the warrant, and would then give their decision. The incense altar was prepared, and the chief magistrate called on the youth to read the paper, reminding him of his guilt if it should prove informal.

Before he could return an answer, the attendants announced that Teihying had alighted from his horse at the gate. Takwae, with ill-suppressed alarm, exclaimed, "When did he get out of prison?" just as his great enemy stalked in with dignity, holding up reverently in both hands a yellow cover which contained the warrant.* Advancing up to the altar of incense, he unfolded the imperial document; while his son took Takwae and made him kneel down in front, ordering the people at the same time to conduct Hanyuen to the bottom of the steps. He next addressed himself to those present, "The criminal noble Takwae having refused to surrender the prisoners, let the imperial warrant be read."

The Censor, perceiving that the two magistrates were present, addressed himself to the Chefoo. "Sir, your presence here is fortunate: be pleased to step up and read aloud this peremptory order from his majesty."

That officer immediately obeyed, and receiving the paper, proceeded to read it out as follows: while

Teih-

* This was precisely the way in which the Viceroy of Canton delivered to Lord Amherst the emperor's letter to the Prince Regent; a yellow tent or tabernacle being prepared for the ceremony.

Teihying went and knelt down by the side of Takwae.*

“Teihying informs us that Takwae has seized and imprisoned Hanyuen, with his wife and daughter: what then prevented the Criminal tribunal from apprehending them? He is hereby authorized to secure those persons wherever they may be found, and let the tribunal judge and report to us. Should they not be forthcoming within three days, Teihying shall be severely punished for deceiving us.”

When he had returned thanks for the imperial goodness, the Censor rose to pay his respects to the nobles who were present. These, however, had left the house as soon as they heard the order read; and the domestics, too, had quietly slunk off. The two magistrates only remained, and Takwae, seeing that his case was desperate, was obliged to humble himself before Teihying. “Sir,” said he, “I am to blame, and hope that you will consider me with indulgence.”

“I wish only,” replied the Censor, “to prove clearly that I have not deceived his majesty—I shall then be satisfied. Hanyuen has declared that his wife and daughter are both here with himself: you had better send for them at once, and prevent our going in to search.”

“No,” said Takwae; “he came here of his own accord; his wife and daughter are not here.”

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* This he did in acknowledgment of his still being under the emperor's displeasure; *i. e.* until he had cleared himself. It will be seen that he returns to prison as soon as he has executed the order.

“ I will not contradict you,” answered the other, “ but we must obey the emperor’s order and look for them.” So saying, he directed his son and the rest to begin the search : which Takwae would gladly have prevented, but could not. None of his own family were in the house ; but as soon as the party went in, they presently heard somebody weeping, and Hanyuen cried out to his daughter “ to dry her tears, for her deliverance was at hand.” His wife, too, who was in a side room, cried out to be released. They found the door locked, but Teihchungyu soon knocked it open with his mace, and the poor woman ran out, being, like her husband, in great apprehension for their daughter.

The latter, on hearing her father’s voice, endeavoured to come down, but was prevented by several female attendants, who however immediately released her, when the mother made known the emperor’s order. There were heaps of fine garments and jewels in the apartment, thrown on one side ; and the young lady’s face and dishevelled hair being shaded with a plain covering, she was conducted down to the hall, where the father, mother, and daughter, all three knelt down before the Censor, and thanked him gratefully for their deliverance.

“ You need not thank me,” replied he, “ it proceeds entirely from the emperor’s goodness : but your case is still before the Criminal court, who alone may

may decide it." Then turning to the second magistrate, "These three are his majesty's prisoners—it will be best for you to deliver them in person to the tribunal."

When that officer had conducted them away, the Censor observed to the superior magistrate, "that Takwae's rank entitled him to be treated with consideration, and he ought therefore to escort him to the proper tribunal in person; that as for himself, he lay still under the emperor's displeasure, and must return to prison." So saying, he mounted his horse, and departed in company with his son.

Dragg'd from his lair, the savage tiger owns
His hunter's prowess;—and the wily fox,
Track'd in his flight, to arts superior yields.
The pearl,* long-lost, to its glad owner given,
Prov'd generous deeds, though rare, no fabled things.

We will not stop to relate the various arts of influence and bribery to which Takwae had recourse, with a view to escaping the punishment of his misdeeds; but proceed to observe, that the Censor, on his return to the prison, made out a clear statement of his successful proceedings, and sent it up to the emperor. On the following morning, this reply was received:

"Teih-

* *Höpoo Hëen*, in Canton province, was of old famous for its pearls. There was a pure and upright magistrate of that district, who, having received a valuable present of pearls from one of the inhabitants, said nothing at the time, but sent them back to the owner after his departure from the government of the place. "The return of the pearls to Höpoo Hëen," is become proverbial for any act of disinterestedness.

“Teihying, by discovering and apprehending the persons who were secreted, has proved the truth of his representation, and vindicated himself. Let him leave his confinement, and fill his former office for a time, until the decision of the Criminal tribunal be known: he may then be promoted. Respect this.”

When he had returned thanks for the imperial bounty, the Censor proceeded to join his family, and was joyfully received by his wife and son.

The Criminal court in the meanwhile, though they would gladly have assisted Takwae, having already involved themselves on his account, were obliged to be cautious on the present occasion. The testimony of the three persons who had been seized and confined by that wicked noble was so irresistible, that they were compelled to pronounce him guilty; though at the end of their report to the emperor they added a few words in his favour. “Takwae,” said they, “is some forty years of age, and it was from his anxiety alone to obtain an heir that he desired to possess the virtuous young woman in question. After taking her to his house, he made use of no criminal violence, but sought her consent by mere kindness and persuasion. The merits of his ancestors, too, may entitle him to indulgence: the final decision, however, must be pronounced by your majesty; it does not befit us, your ministers, to say more on the subject, but to await the imperial command with
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reverence." In two days the following answer was received :

" The noble Takwae, enjoying high hereditary rank, forgot his duty, and carried off the daughter of Hanyuen, betrothed to the scholar Weipei. This act was sufficiently unlawful ; but when the Censor accused him to us, far from repenting of his former offence, he seized the parents of the young woman, and concealing them in the retreat which we had conferred on him, accused Teihying in return of having deceived us. His guilt is very atrocious, and being regularly proved against him, ought to be punished with degradation and death. But in consideration of the merits of his family, we cannot punish his crime as it deserves. Let him be confined to his palace for three years, and deprived of one year's revenue, which is to be given to Hanyuen in reparation of injuries sustained. As the latter shewed a brave determination in the defence of his principles, and proved himself a worthy disciple of the true doctrine,* let him be rewarded with an official situation, in which his merits will not be thrown away ; and let his daughter, who maintained her virtue, be happily united with her betrothed lover. Teihying, in reward of the uprightness and determination of his conduct, which has given us high satisfaction, is promoted to be one of the chiefs of the

* Of Confucius.

the Censorate. Let the Criminal tribunal be amerced in three months' salary, for having unjustly favoured Takwae.—Respect this.”

The whole of Peking was presently filled, on receipt of this edict, with the fame of Teihchungyu's exploit. Every one became anxious to see and be acquainted with him, and his visitors were pouring in from morning till night. The gratitude of Hanyuen and the young student, his son-in-law, of whom the first had obtained promotion, and the second a spouse, through the exertions of our hero, was boundless. They treated him as a superior, or a god! But the Censor became very uneasy on his son's account. “Heaven,” said he to him, “will not allow mortals to be too proud and elated. Recollect that prosperity and adversity are very nearly allied;—it is but a short time since I was in prison—my fortune then seemed to be at the lowest ebb; but the emperor's goodness as suddenly restored me to the height of prosperity. The unprincipled Takwae can never forget the disgrace you have brought upon him, and will certainly seek revenge for the indignities you offered to his person. As for myself, I am the minister of the emperor, and entirely at his disposal: life and death, happiness and misery, I must equally accept at his hands: but you are free to rove whither you please;—better then retire from this dangerous place. The gradual extension of your fame, and intercourse

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in the metropolis, may expose you to the machinations of the envious and malicious. I advise you, therefore, under pretext of travelling for information, to retire to some distance. It will have the usual effect of magnifying your merits, as every thing which is imperfectly known, is more esteemed than that which is familiar and vulgar.”*

“ I myself, sir,” replied his son, “ am tired of so much society, and entertain the same sentiments with yourself: still, considering that your censorial office peculiarly subjects you to men’s resentment, I cannot feel easy in leaving you exposed to it alone.”

“ I have clothed myself in uprightness,” said his father, “ and walked in the straight path of rectitude; besides, being now happily exalted by the emperor to a higher station, I may despise little slanders, and feel secure from any great evil. You need not, therefore, remain on that account; but when you go, neglect not to prosecute your studies, nor forget to make the virtuous ancients your models: and on no account let the impetuosity of your temper betray you into trouble.”

The youth bowed low, and thanked his father for his advice; and in two or three days more, finding that his visitors rather increased than diminished, he made preparations for his journey, and bidding adieu

to

* In the original there is an allusion to the partial and indistinct appearance of the fabled dragon—a sort of uncertainty that excites men’s awe and wonder:—“ Omne ignotum,” &c.

to his father and mother, set off on his return to the family house, accompanied by his page.

He came—by urgent calls of duty led,

He went—to foil the vengeance of his foes :

The destinies that o'er his movements hung

Heav'n will in time reveal!

On his arrival, however, Teihchungyu found that the fame of his own exploit, and of his father's promotion, had preceded him. Not only did his relations and friends throng to wait upon him, but the whole district was thrown into a commotion. "Should it be always thus," thought he to himself, "I had better have remained at home in Peking. I must follow my father's advice and go to some distance, under plea of travelling for instruction."

After the expiration of a month he delivered the house in charge to a domestic, and proceeded, accompanied by Seacutan, on his travels. But this expedition must be separately related :—to learn the effects of spirited resolution, and the embarrassments that resulted from services mutually rendered, it will be necessary to peruse the following chapters.

CHAPTER III.

" SHUEYPINGSIN ADROITLY CHANGES THE FLOWER."

—
That weakness is a woman's lot, all know,
Few know a woman can sometimes be wise !
A single word the lurking mischief quell'd,
The flying fate was by a turn avoided :
No sound, no signal, did her plans require ;
But all succeeded in the time of trial :
While to her foes' vile schemes full play she gave,
—Schemes fraught with late repentance !

WHEN Teihchungyu, in compliance with his father's advice, commenced his tour, he was still undecided as to the best route to be pursued : considering, however, that Shantung was a province celebrated for the birth of extraordinary persons,* of men eminent on account of their talents and virtue, he thought he could do no better than proceed in that direction, with the chance of encountering such characters. His mind thus made up, he desired Seaoutau to hire a good mule, and proceeded without delay on his journey.

Who studies books must close his silent cell ;
But Wisdom's search lies farther off from home.
Explore each untried nook beneath the sky,†
And fill the inlets of the mind with knowledge.

We will leave him for the present, and take up

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another

* Confucius among the rest.

† " Beneath the sky," in Chinese acceptation, is only ' the empire.'

another part of our narrative. In Leihching Hëen, a subordinate district dependent on the chief city of Shantung province, was the family residence of a person of rank, named Shueykeuyih, who had for many years been a member of the Military tribunal at Peking, where he acquired a great reputation by the bold independence of his character. It was his misfortune, however, towards the advanced age of sixty, to lose his lady, who left him no son, and only a single daughter, named Shueypingsin, of extraordinary beauty.* Her eyebrows were like the slender leaflet of the willow in spring, and her whole aspect that of a delicate autumnal flower. Brought up tenderly in the retirement of the female apartments, she surpassed in delicacy a silken tissue. Still, however, when the occasion called for it, she possessed talents and resolution beyond many of the other sex. Her father loved and valued her as a gem, and being obliged to reside chiefly at the capital in his official capacity,† entrusted the management of his household entirely

* Chinese ideas of beauty are peculiar; their ladies resemble those described in Terence :

“ ——— quas matres student

“ Demissis humeris esse : vincto pectore (pede), ut graciles sient :

“ Si qua est habitior paulo, pugilem esse aiunt : deducunt cibum :

“ Tametsi bona est natura, reddunt curaturâ junceas.”—*Eun. II. 3.*

† It is well known to be the policy of the Chinese government, that no person shall hold a responsible office in his own province and city. The statutes farther provide, that no officer shall purchase lands or tenements within his jurisdiction.

entirely to his daughter, who supplied to him the place of a son. It was in this manner that she reached the age of seventeen without any steps being taken towards her marriage.

Her father had unfortunately a very worthless younger brother, named Shueyun, who, in spite of some pretensions that he made to letters, was withal deplorably ignorant. Satisfied with the rank and consequence derived from his family and connexions, he associated with the vilest companions, and thereby naturally became reduced both in money and credit: for though he sometimes contrived by unworthy means to collect a little together, it soon slipped away, and left him as poor as ever. It was the happy fate of this man to have three sons, who inherited all their father's ignorance and bad qualities. He had a daughter too, exceedingly plain, but young, and born in the same year with her cousin Shueypingsin, than whom she was only two months older.

Shueyun, seeing that his brother had no son, and that his estate was large, longed extremely to get the management of it into his own hands. Unfortunately for him, however, this was impossible, as long as his niece remained single: and for this reason he was constantly employing their mutual relations to urge marriage to her. One match was praised for its wealth, another for its honours, and a third for the youth, the talents, or the handsome person of the

proposed bridegroom. But the young lady had no views of that sort at present, and their speeches made not the least impression on her.

Shueyun, at a loss what step to take, discovered that the son of the minister Kwoloongtung, a neighbour of theirs, was in search of a wife, and presently despatched some one to propose his niece. This young man, Kwoketsu, was a debauched libertine, who in his choice of a spouse dreamed of nothing but her personal attractions: he accordingly inquired if she were handsome or otherwise? —to which of course a reply was made, giving a splendid account of her beauty and accomplishments. Kwoketsu did not seem to place much faith in what he heard, but rather kept aloof from assenting to the proposals; upon which Shueyun, beginning to grow anxious, agreed that he should have a sight of his niece by stealth. Now although the two brothers had long lived separate, their mansion was originally one house, divided into two equal parts; and along the line of internal separation were points whence some view could be obtained of the contiguous apartments. Kwoketsu was led thither by the uncle to steal a look, and perceiving at once the uncommon beauty of Shueypingsin, he became eager to obtain her in marriage. When his emissaries, however, went over to make proposals, the young lady rejected them altogether.

Much chagrined at this refusal, the young man determined on applying to the principal magistrate of the district,

district, and endeavouring by rich presents to obtain his assistance. That officer, on the first proposal, being aware of the high rank and character of the young lady's father at court, expressed his fears of any unadvised proceeding; but unwilling at the same time to offend Kwoketsu, he called on Shueypingsin,* and endeavoured to influence her by argument; when soon finding it was of no avail, he thought proper to give up the scheme at once.

He heard, however, some time after this, that the father of Shueypingsin had fallen into disgrace with the emperor, for recommending a military leader who was unhappily defeated in an engagement with the enemy, in consequence of which his patron had been deprived of his seat in the Military tribunal, and immediately banished to the frontier. Finding, too, that Kwoloongtong had been lately promoted to the emperor's council, and observing the eagerness with which his son continued to solicit his assistance, he thought it expedient to change his former policy, and further the young man's views.

He accordingly sent for the uncle Shueyun, and addressed him thus: "When young persons of either sex have

* This may appear a violation of the strict seclusion of females in China: but the Chehëen had a magisterial right to make such a visit which an indifferent person could not have assumed; and this visit would of course be made under the usual restrictions and formalities, a screen being interposed, and the lady being heard, but not seen. They will sometimes depart from their strict rules in favour even of strangers; and Englishmen have occasionally been allowed the honour of a visit to ladies of some consideration, when they allowed themselves not only to be heard, but seen too.

have reached the proper age, and a suitable match presents itself, it should not be neglected. That a daughter ought to await her father's commands on this point, is doubtless the general rule: but if time presses, and further delay is inexpedient, the general rule must yield to the particular case. Your niece is now of a marriageable age, she is left at home without the protection of either mother or brothers; and there are a number of youths among the household, which alone is objectionable. All this, however, would be of less consequence, were her father still in office at Peking, as it might then be argued that she was awaiting his choice: but now, unhappily, he is exiled to the frontier, and his very existence becomes extremely uncertain; why not act, then, according to the exigency of the case: and since your niece may not chuse for herself, make use of your privilege, as her nearest relation, to chuse for her? Besides, the father of Kwoketsu has been promoted to the highest dignity, and that youth himself possesses good abilities. It is altogether an excellent match, and you ought by no means to allow the transient prejudices of your niece to interfere with such important arrangements for her future life. I asked you to come hither on purpose to give you this advice; and if you do not chuse to follow it, you will not only miss a good match, but throw away an opportunity of benefiting your own private interests.”*

Shueyun

* He takes care that the strongest argument shall come last.

Shueyun very readily fell in with a scheme which so exactly suited his own views. "Sir," said he to the magistrate, "I have already taken great pains to persuade my niece; but accustomed, like a spoiled child as she is, to consult nothing but her own whims, she treated every proposal of the kind with contempt. Backed however by the weight of your worship's wise and enlightened instructions, I shall now go and convey them to my niece. She cannot plead her father's wishes as an excuse for her obstinacy, and will hardly venture to oppose your authority."

He proceeded straight home, and went over to see his niece with an affectation of great alarm. "You know," said he to her, "what pains I took to persuade you to compliance when the Chefoo came here with his proposals; and with how little success. The mischief that an underling in office can do, when provoked, to those under his authority, is proverbial: what then may you not expect from a person of his power and consequence! As long as your father remained in office, he was inclined to keep some terms with us; but now that he is disgraced and banished, the case becomes quite altered. His worship begins to use very strong language; and unless you comply forthwith, the worst is to be feared. You are an unprotected orphan; I myself have no influence: what then can we do to oppose him?" He concluded by repeating his former praises of Kwoketsu, and advising his niece to consider,
that

that if she refused this fair offer, she might live to repent it two or three years hence, when an equally good match should be out of the question.

Shueypingsin replied by urging the necessity of her parents' consent on a subject so important as marriage, and the impropriety of her being guided by any other authority. "But," said her uncle, "the magistrate has already settled this point: he has determined, that since your father's consent cannot be obtained, the consent of the local civil officer is the same thing; or at least that your uncle's authority may supply its place. Do not persist any longer in your obstinacy."

His niece held down her head in a thoughtful posture, and seemed to reflect within herself for a few moments. "The magistrate must, no doubt, be respected," said she; "but still he is not a member of the family. If you, my uncle, however, chuse to supply my father's place on this occasion, it certainly admits of consideration."

"And why not?" said Shueyun; "Are not a father and an uncle the nearest possible relations?"

"I have always looked on my father's consent as indispensable," replied his niece; "but if a father and an uncle are really the same thing, then do you take the whole affair upon yourself: there can be no occasion to consult *me* about it."

Shueyun was overjoyed to hear her talk in this way. "Now," exclaimed he, "you begin to think reasonably!"

ably ! What should have made me take such pains on this subject, had I not felt myself competent to carry it through ? But hear me, child : you will experience hereafter the full advantages of this match : your future father-in-law is of the emperor's council ; and should matters turn out well, he may be induced to present a petition for your father's recal from exile."

" This indeed would be fortunate !" observed his niece.

" Now," continued he, " as the magistrate is expecting your answer, suppose you make out, in your own hand-writing, a ticket of nativity,* that I may present it in token of your consent."

" It will be more proper for *you* to provide the nuptial ticket," replied his niece ; " for it would seem indecorous on the part of a female."

" Well," answered he, " I represent your father, and may do so with great propriety ; but pray give me a draft at least of your eight characters."

Shueypingsin immediately took up a pencil ; and when she had written out eight characters by pairs, in four rows, gave the paper to her uncle. He, delighted with his acquisition, hurried home to his own house ; and

* Consisting of eight characters, which express in pairs the year, month, day, and hour of a person's birth, and are the ground-work of a calculation which the professors of judicial astrology, among this superstitious people, pretend to make of one's fortune. In negotiating a marriage, the *pätsze* (eight characters) of either party are sent and compared together.

and calling his three sons together, told them that the marriage was finally settled.

“ But it was only yesterday,” observed the eldest, “ that our cousin* made every possible objection ; whence comes this sudden compliance to-day ? ”

“ The only difficulty with her,” replied Shueyun, “ was the want of her father’s consent ; but the moment I told her an uncle’s would do as well, she complied at once.”

“ Yes,” said the son ; “ but when she considers the matter again, I fear she may change her mind.”

“ There can be no changing now,” cried the father ; “ I have made her give me her eight characters ;” so taking the paper out of his sleeve, he shewed it to his three sons.

They all viewed it with delight ; and agreed that changing was now quite out of the question. “ Very well,” said Shueyun ; “ but there is something to be done yet”—and being asked to explain himself, continued :—
“ she says, that since I act in her father’s place, the
nuptial

* Literally, ‘ our sister on the other side of the wall.’ The sons and daughters of an *uncle* on the father’s side, as they have the same family name, and very often live under the same roof, are styled brothers and sisters, with some such qualification as the above, and, like brothers and sisters, cannot intermarry with their cousins : not so the children of an *aunt*, since a woman, when once married, belongs altogether to her husband’s family, and becomes almost alienated from her own relations by blood. This, however, must be understood with the exception of her lawful allegiance to her own father and mother, which seems to remain in full force (see *Leu-lee*), while the additional and equally strong subjection to the parents of her husband is superadded.

nuptial ticket, and the usual presents, must be provided by myself."

"We must spend a little to obtain more," observed his eldest son; "unless we chuse to incur this small expense now, we can hardly expect to possess her father's property by and bye."

"That is all very well," replied Shueyun; "but where is the money to come from?"

After a little consultation they agreed to pledge a portion of the family wardrobe;* and being thus possessed of some ready money, they first provided a roll of scarlet silk, on which the eight characters were blazoned† in solid gold; and a handsome nuptial ticket being thus prepared, they took it in person to the Chefoo, telling that magistrate they had brought him the ratification of the match according to his desire. He was very glad to see it, and directed that it might be taken to his deputy the Chehëen, with his request to that officer

* The necessity of so low an expedient cannot be considered as very probable in a family so connected: but the design of the author perhaps was, to sacrifice even a little probability for the sake of placing this particular family in the most contemptible and ridiculous light. The wardrobe of a Chinese, however, being composed of embroidered silks and furs—of very expensive and lasting materials, forms a more serious portion of his property than in Europe. The translator remembers being at an entertainment where the party, according to the custom of the country, being seated in an open room, without fires, the European guests soon began to complain of cold; upon which the host immediately accommodated the whole number (ten or twelve) with handsome spencers, all made of the most costly furs; telling them, at the same time, that he had plenty more in reserve.

† Literally, 'nailed, or rivetted.'

officer to superintend the wedding.* When the latter heard it was his superior's desire, he felt himself obliged to undertake the office, so a fortunate day was selected; and he went in procession, attended by music, to present the nuptial ticket to the bridegroom. Kwo-ketsu seized upon the prize as though it had been a treasure of pearls; and having prepared a sumptuous repast, made much of the Chehëen. After the lapse of a short period, he provided costly marriage presents; and chusing a fortunate day in his turn, requested that magistrate to escort them in state to the family mansion of Shueypingsin.

On the day before their arrival, Shueyun had told his niece to prepare herself for their reception. She however replied, "This house, desolate and deserted as it is from the long absence of my father, is hardly a proper place to receive the marriage presents: and since you, my uncle, personate my father on this occasion, and issue the nuptial ticket, the presents also should be sent to your house. Besides, we are all descended from the same stock, and their being received on that side or this, amounts to just the same thing."

"Well," said her uncle, "they shall be received at my house; but I fancy that, in sending an answer, it will be correct to write your father's name."

"If you write my father's name," observed the young lady,

* The Chefoo, conscious that he had been guilty of a stretch of power, wished to appear as little as possible in the transaction.

lady, "how can you be said to act instead of my father? Besides, he is exiled, and in disgrace with the emperor, and should you write his name, it may be treated with some disrespect by the family of Kwoketsu. The usual ceremonies being conducted by yourself in person, it surely will be more proper to write your own name than my father's."

The simple Shueyun assented likewise to this, and hurrying home to procure some ornamented tickets, came back and requested his niece to write upon them.

"Very well," said she, "I will do so; but you had better tell people they were written by your sons, for fear they should laugh at you."

He readily agreed to this, and when Shueypingsin had inscribed his name on the tickets, she added below, that they were to return thanks for "his daughter's nuptial presents," and read them aloud to her uncle.

"But why write *my daughter*?" enquired he.

"You personate my father," said the young lady; "why not call me your daughter?"

He made no objections, but taking up the tickets, carried them over to his house. "These tickets," said he to his sons, "run in my name, and speak of my niece as my own daughter; not to mention the marriage presents, then, the fate of the whole property is settled at once."

They all rejoiced together, and congratulated each other

other upon their good fortune ; and on the following day, before the arrival of the presents, they dressed themselves in their habits of ceremony, throwing open the central gate,* and preparing the great hall with silk hangings and carpets for their reception.

The magistrate was met with a loud concert of music, and entertained in a sumptuous manner through the day. Shueypingsin, on her part, took no notice whatever of their proceedings ; but when the guests had all dispersed, her uncle opened the little door of communication, and invited her over to see the arrangements. He then asked her who was to take possession of the marriage presents. “ As you, my uncle,” replied the young lady, “ incur so much pains and expense on account of this wedding, and as you represent my father, they must certainly pertain to yourself ; it is almost needless to ask the question. Not only these, however, but the whole of my father’s property, as he has no sons, must shortly belong to yourself and my cousins ; though for the present, my father being exiled, and I uncertain of his life or death, it does not befit me to deliver them up entirely without authority.”

Shueyun clapped his hands together, and exclaimed with delight, “ Niece, you are indeed an extraordinary young woman ! where did you learn to think and speak with so much understanding ?” He then sent for his three sons and his daughter, and when the marriage presents

* See page 29, note.

sents had been inspected by them, the whole were put away in order.

A speculation oft, through thirst inordinate
Of gain, is ruin'd—avarice dulls men's wit!
'Twas not the quality of the tempting bait—
—Our greedy fish was ready to gulp all!

When more than a month had elapsed, Kwoketsu got his house ready for the bride's reception, and having carefully selected the most fortunate day in the calendar, gave notice that he was coming in procession with the gilded sedan and band of music to take her away. Shueyun hurried over to inform his niece, and bid her prepare herself. She, however, with affected ignorance, and the greatest shew of unconcern, inquired what it was she was to prepare for?

"You seem disposed to joke," exclaimed her uncle, with some surprise. "Kwoketsu is coming in state this very day to wed you,—the procession will presently be at the door—you must know this—why affect ignorance of it?"

"He is coming to wed *your daughter*," replied his niece: "what concern has it with me?"

More astonished still, the other cried out, "Has this young man engaged the assistance and good offices of so many friends to wed your cousin? A pretty creature is she, truly, that he should send all those presents on *her* account!"

"In the absence of my exiled father," said Shuey-pingsin,

pingsin, "his whole household is under my especial charge—it cannot be *me* that Kwoketsu is coming to wed."

Annoyed as he was, Shueyun still pretended to laugh it off; "You talk very well," said he—"but your proceedings have not been quite so prudent."

"If I do not wish to marry," replied his niece, "who is there here that shall compel me? I am conscious of nothing improper in what I have done."

"Not wishing to marry," said Shueyun, "you should not have written and delivered to me your ticket of nativity: but that being once sent to the bridegroom, I suspect the two words 'not marry' are not so easily to be uttered."

"Uncle," exclaimed she, "do not persist in your dream: I never wished to wed this person—what then should have induced me to write out *my own* nuptial ticket for him?"

"My good niece," said he, laughing, "this cannot avail you any thing: do you think that when I took the eight characters, written by your own hand, to have them beaten out in gold, I could have been under any mistake about the fact? However, I am more prudent on this occasion than yourself, for the original paper is preserved in proof: therefore, say what you will, it can avail you nothing."

"If I really did write *my own* eight characters," replied Shueypingsin, "there is nothing more to be said ;

said ; but if I did not, you must cease to persecute me farther on this subject. Suppose you go and bring the paper, that we may all examine it together."

"That will be very fair," said he, and went straight over to his house, whence he brought the paper in question, accompanied by his three sons, to confront them with his niece.—"Now," cried Shueyun, holding up the paper to her, "was not that written by yourself—what have you to say to that?"

"Uncle," said the young lady, "let me ask you the date of my birth?"

"You were born," replied he, "on the 15th of the 8th moon, in the second watch—the same evening I was sitting drinking with your father, in celebration of the harvest moon: it would be strange if I did not know the day."

"And when was my cousin born?" inquired his niece.

"On the 6th of the 6th moon," replied he, "at mid-day: the weather was very hot, and occasioned much suffering to her mother."

"Have you examined this ticket of nativity," said Shueypingsin, "to see what date it records?"

"Those are merely eight astronomical characters," replied Shueyun, "without any mention of months or days—what should I examine them for?"

"But do you not understand what they mean?" said his niece.

"No," answered he, "I do not*—I only know that when they were beaten out in gold, the eight characters together weighed about one tael and one-third."

"The eight characters on this ticket," observed Shueypingsin, "express the date of my *cousin's* birth—they have no reference to me whatever: why do you come and torment *me*, then?"

"They are your's," exclaimed Shueyun, in a tone of rage and despair, "for you wrote them yourself!—how can you pretend they are your cousin's?"

"Do not put yourself into a passion, uncle," said the young lady, "but let us, in order to remove all doubt, send for a calculator of nativities, and ask him whether these characters mean the 15th of the 8th moon, or the 6th of the 6th."

Shueyun stood stupified for a while, and then began to rave, and stamp with his feet. "My daughter," exclaimed he, "has been sold and deceived by you, it is evident; but your falsehood must suffer, and the truth prevail. Not only do Kwoketsu and the two magistrates know it, but the whole neighbourhood can witness that the match was made for yourself; and though you may have falsified the nuptial ticket, yet if all the persons engaged in the transaction are of one voice, how are you to extricate yourself so cleanly?"

"There is nothing from which I need extricate myself,"

* This is as before, to place him in a contemptible light, for being ignorant of what he ought to know.

myself," replied his niece : " if the young man espoused *me*, why did he send the presents to *your* house instead of to mine ?—why did *you* receive them, and return an acknowledgment on account of *your daughter*?—not a single word throughout the business had any reference to myself."

" But it was with your own consent," said he, " that I acted as your father, and therefore called you my daughter,—it was in consequence of our mutual engagement !"

" Had you no daughter of your own," answered she, " that indefinite term might have been allowable ; but as you *have* a daughter, you should have made some distinction between us, and called me your younger, or second daughter :—even according to your own argument, then, you can make nothing of it."

The unfortunate uncle, finding the case go so much against him, lost all patience : he thumped his breast, stamped on the ground, and began to weep aloud. " Enough, enough," cried he, " I see you have undone me ! This young man is notoriously violent ; his father is of the emperor's council : he has spent a vast deal of money on your account ; then, to-day, on the joyful occasion of his nuptials, he has invited all his noble relatives, and prepared a feast ; the music and the state sedan have been ready since morning :—and when evening arrives, he will ride hither on purpose to carry you away. What think you he will do when he finds no

bride ready for him? I make you responsible for whatever happens;—nay, for my very life! You have had no scruple in injuring me; and I, for my part, shall not hesitate to set aside every feeling, and accuse you before the magistrates; when the circumstances are known, it will be plain that you have deceived me, not that I deceived Kwoketsu. The magistrates shall judge between us; and when it comes to that, I suspect you will make but a poor figure, whatever may be your eloquence or address.” So saying he began to weep afresh.

“If you accuse me, uncle,” said Shueypingsin, very calmly, “mine will not be a difficult task; I need only state that you would have taken advantage of my father’s exile to inveigle me, a helpless orphan, into marriage, for the sake of possessing the family property. I apprehend your guilt would considerably exceed mine.”

“I do not wish to accuse you,” said her uncle, frightened by what she said; “but how can I otherwise escape the consequences of this affair?”

“If you only wish to escape the consequences,” observed the young lady, “without involving me in the question, there is an easy way for you.”

Shueyun was somewhat calmed on hearing this; but still exclaimed, “A god or a spirit* could hardly unravel the knot—why talk, then, of its being so easy?”

“If

* What the Chinese denominate Shinsëen, are a race of imaginary beings, haunting the woods and mountains, and enjoying a state of lazy beatitude,

"If you will listen to my scheme," answered she, "the extreme trouble in which you are now placed, will be converted into an equal excess of joy and satisfaction."

Shueyun thought this was very strange. "With little less than death hanging over me," said he, "what hopes can I entertain of the kind? I shall be satisfied if you can only save me from the resentment of the bridegroom."

"I think my cousin, your daughter," said Shuey-pingsin, "is seventeen years of age, and you must wish her married. What prevents your taking this opportunity, and boldly effecting her nuptials?—Why go in search of trouble, when you may conclude this business so admirably?"

Her uncle held down his head in deep silence, and then exclaimed, with a mixture of fear and joy, "This, to be sure, is one way; but then your cousin is so inelegant, and so unlike yourself, that Kwoketsu will be discontented and find fault."

"The nuptial ticket," replied the young lady, "was evidently

beatitude, exempt from the cares and the passions of life; but still exercising some influence over human affairs. They are drawn as old men with long beards, or as young females, sauntering about in the moonshine, amidst a landscape of rocks and woods. We find something analogous in the early superstitions of every country.

"Jam tum religio pavidos terreat agrestes

"Dira loci: jam tum sylvam saxumque tremebant:

"Hoc nemus, hunc inquit, frondoso vertice collem

"Quis Deus incertum est, habitat Deus."

evidently my cousin's: the presents were evidently brought to your house; and the card of acknowledgment as evidently received them on account of *your daughter*. This evening he comes openly to your house to espouse her; and she ought plainly, therefore, to go and be married to him. What fault can he find? —But let him find fault; you have done nothing informal, and have nothing to fear. Besides, this match will place you at once among the first persons in the province;* and whatever may have occurred previously, may afterwards be easily got over. Was I right in promising that your sorrow should be converted into joy?"

Shueyun's countenance cleared up. "Whence is it, child," exclaimed he, "that, young and inexperienced as you are, such excellent contrivances should arise in your mind,—that you should be able to reduce your uncle to the brink of death, and then so suddenly restore him to life again?"

"You have no right to complain of my deceiving you, uncle," answered she; "you sought to do me a serious injury,† and I was obliged to protect myself to the best of my power."

"Say no more about it," said the other;—"but now
for

* Literally, 'you will possess the honours of *Taeshan*.' This is a famous mountain in Shantung province (where the scene is laid), near Tsenanfoo, the chief city.

† Although in her own defence, the deception practised throughout by Shueypingsin must not be too strictly judged by European notions.

for your cousin, plain and awkward as she is, and so totally unprepared for this emergency : you must come over and array her for the marriage !”

Shueypingsin readily assented to this, and taking over two of her own waiting-maids, superintended her cousin's toilet from noon even until dusk, seeing her hair combed, her face smoothed, her teeth scrubbed, and her eyebrows dressed.* Then the various ornaments were piled upon her head ; her person was arrayed in habiliments of costly silk and embroidery, and she was duly perfumed with rare and precious unguents. Our young lady next instructed her cousin to affect an excess of modesty on being introduced to the inner apartments ; to insist on all the lights being extinguished ; and, in order to prevent a too early exposure of her face, to retire to rest very soon. The maids

In fact, deceit of all kinds is rather honoured than discouraged in China. The very words which express it, imply some superiority over the person deceived. Of the common expression *ke-p'een* ‘to cheat,’ the first syllable means also to ‘insult ;’ and the second, in its original and derivative sense, implies ‘to bestride a horse and ride him.’ Gibbon, in a note to his History, observes : “ There is yet room for an interesting work, which “ should trace the connexion between the manners and the languages of “ nations.” In China, where almost every long journey is performed by water, *haou foongshuey*, ‘good wind and water,’ has become expressive, not only of ‘good luck’ on a journey, but of good luck in every circumstance and affair of life. In like manner (if we quit China), it could only be among a polished people that ‘benigne !’ meant the refusal of a favour ; or that, among ourselves, ‘pardon me,’ has become equivalent to ‘no.’

* By reducing them to a narrow curved line, which they compare to a willow-leaf in spring. The above is of course said satirically.

maids were likewise directed, when they came to fill the cup of alliance, to cause the bridegroom to get as tipsy as possible. If the latter, after a view of her face the next morning, began to give vent to his anger and disappointment, her cousin was instructed to throw herself into a fit of pretended desperation, and search for some means of destroying herself; which would, no doubt, alarm the bridegroom, and bring him to his senses. Though this young lady's intellect was not of the first order, she soon learnt a lesson which conduced so materially to the promotion of her own selfish interests;—she was presently arrayed, and prepared in all respects for the enterprize.

The bridegroom, mounted on a choice steed, and attended by a huge retinue, came in the evening to fetch home his bride; and the terrified Shueyun, without a choice left him how to act, dried the sweat from his forehead as he pushed his daughter into the state sedan;* when the music striking up, she was carried off in nuptial procession.

Though cunning their vile plots, and laid with care,
No match prov'd they for her intelligence:
Vain was the fury of the † robber bird,
Its destined victim had removed her nest.

The

* There was some reason for his alarm; for the law is, "If the family of the bride deceives the family of the bridegroom, so as to induce them to contract a marriage by indicating and leading them to expect a different person from the one actually named and described in the contract, the giver away of the woman shall be punished with eighty blows, and her family shall restore the marriage presents."—STAUNTON'S *Penal Code*, sect. ci. † See *Treatise on Poetry*, part ii.

The young man, delighted at the idea of having secured such a prize as Shueypingsin, escorted the bride to the gate of his own house, where a crowd of female attendants met and supported her to the principal hall. An embroidered silk veil being thrown over her head, and her whole person adorned like some goddess, the people present of course took her for Shueypingsin, and were very loud in their admiration. When the usual reverences had been performed, they proceeded to the bridal chamber, where the cup of alliance was prepared, and where she was invited to pledge the bridegroom—but the young lady had received her lesson, and ran immediately to hide herself within the curtains, shewing the most determined resolution to remain there. Kwoketsu took this for a natural bashfulness, and unwilling to use violence, went out to the principal hall, where his relations were assembled to celebrate the nuptials. The joyfulness of the occasion, and the exhortations of his friends, caused him very soon to become fuddled; but he contrived to make his way back to where his bride was, and where he found only a few of the candles lighted, and the young lady herself ensconced within the curtains. He made his way towards the bed, tipsy as he was, and asked why she was not asleep at that late hour? She, however, turned her face another way, and called to the women, in a low voice, to extinguish the lights. The maids, before they ventured to obey, waited for orders from Kwoketsu, who

who very complaisantly told them to do as their mistress bade them, and take their departure.

The next morning about daylight, when both awaked, the bridegroom turned his eyes towards his new wife, and to his utter dismay perceived, instead of the beauty whom he had before beheld by stealth, a woman with a broad forehead, square face, and the most plain and ordinary features! He jumped up, and throwing on his clothes in a great hurry, exclaimed, "You are not the bride I was contracted to!—what do you do here?"

"Who shall tell me that?" replied the lady; "look again."

Kwoketsu stared at her, and shook his head. "Alas, no!" said he, "she whom I meant was like a fair flower* after rain, or the willow seen through a mist!—nothing like what I now behold!—I have been sadly abused by that old dog Shueyun!"

His spouse now flew into a great passion. "Have you not married me?" cried she; "am I not your wife?—why do you abuse my father to my face in this unmannerly style?"

"Alas, alas! then," said the young man, "it was his niece whom he took me to see; you call him father, and must needs be his own daughter, not her whom I intended to espouse."

"How can you be so stupid," exclaimed his spouse, as

* *Hibiscus mutabilis*—Fooyung.

as she sat up in bed and put on her clothes ; “ you are talking of my *uncle's* daughter ! If you wished to marry her, what prevented your asking *his* consent, instead of coming to my father ? Besides, the nuptial ticket, which my father sent, was mine, and on the card of acknowledgment was written ‘ his daughter,’—surely you must have seen this ! Your presents, moreover, were sent to our house, and you came in person to our house to receive me : how then can you pretend it was to espouse any one but myself ? Allied to a family of rank, I have been brought to your house, and openly accepted as your wife, with all the customary and legal forms of marriage, and after all, you begin to insult me with such language as this ! How am I to perform the duties of a wife,* or to raise up descendants for you hereafter ?—nay, it is better to put an end to myself at once ! ” With this she jumped down from the bed in a pretended paroxysm of despair, and seized hold of a large red handkerchief, as if about to strangle herself.

The vexation of Kwoketsu was sufficiently great on the occasion, but he was in a still greater fright to see her in this desperate temper. Besotted and deceived as he had been by the violence of his passion,—would the reader learn the farther fruits of his folly, he must attend to the following chapter.

* Literally, ‘ draw water and pound rice,’ a figurative expression for the same.

CHAPTER. IV.

“ KWOKETSU STUPIDLY GRASPS AT THE MOON’S
SHADOW.”

Oh wondrous dulness to which some are prone,
Unapt to see what stares them full in view !
The spring dream fled, they still brood over it—
The autumn clouds dispers’d, they fancy still
They see them changing !—Unless heaven befriend,
The acutest become dull—the powerful steed
Unrein’d, ungovern’d, spends his speed in vain :—
Adventurous though their plots, and boldly plann’d,
Lo, a weak maiden’s prudence foils them all !

WE have already described the anger of Kwoketsu on finding that he had been deceived, and the terror he experienced when his new wife, after a volley of irresistible arguments, made him believe she was going to destroy herself. He gave the lady in strict charge to her female attendants, and then having dressed himself, proceeded forthwith in secret to the residence of the Chefoo.

He told that magistrate a piteous tale of the trick which had been played him by Shueyun ; how he had first of all taken him to steal a look at his niece, and then contrived that he should marry his daughter. “ The sums I have spent,” exclaimed he, “ are the least part of the evil, but it is a sore thing to be so befooled by
that

that fellow ! and I come, sir, to conjure you, by the regard you bear my father, to afford me some redress in punishing him."

The Chefoo, after a little consideration replied, " It is true enough that Shueyun has deceived you ; but how remiss and unmindful you were of your own interests in this business ! What made you receive the nuptial ticket without inquiring into the age of the bride ? You have occasioned *my* being taken in, as well as yourself. But, allowing that such deceit could not easily be foreseen, how happened you not to send the presents to the bride's own house, instead of her uncle's ; and when the uncle returned a card for his niece, and called her his daughter, you might very well have suspected some trick. You went, besides, to Shueyun's house to receive the lady ; a very plain way of espousing his daughter. The thing, however, is settled, and she is fairly your wife. Should you complain of your bargain, very few people will believe the story. With regard to your stolen interview, it was an irregular transaction, and not rashly to be brought forward in court. Say nothing about this business at present ; but go home, and wait quietly until I have had a private interview with Shueyun ; I may, perhaps, gain some intelligence from him which shall enable me to assist you."

Kwoketsu was obliged to be content with this : he went home, and tried to pacify his wife as well as he could ;—and there we will leave him for the present.

From

From the moment his daughter had quitted the house, the terror of the unhappy Shueyun threw him into a cold sweat. He endeavoured to sleep away his fears ;—but there was no sleep for him, and he rose with the first dawn of light, for the purpose of sending a secret messenger to reconnoitre the premises. The messenger came back, and reported that every thing was very quiet ; upon which he thought to himself, “ This Kwoketsu is a decidedly violent character : he is not the man to bear an injury patiently ! ” Thus it was that he remained full of the most horrible apprehensions, until about mid-day, when a messenger came from the magistrate, with a request that he would walk over and see him. Though in miserable plight, Shueyun was obliged to muster sufficient resolution to carry him to the audience ; where having arrived, he was desired by the Chefoo to retire to a back apartment and sit down. The attendants being dismissed, the following discourse was addressed to him by the magistrate :

“ You know very well that the person whom I intended as a wife for Kwoketsu was your niece ; instead of whom you have, in a very artful and criminal manner, passed off your daughter ; thus imposing upon myself as well as the young man ; who has this morning presented an address, begging me to subject you to the fullest penalties of the law in return for your vile deceit. In consideration of your connexions, I first of all send for you in this manner, thinking there
may

may be something yet undivulged ; and should such be the case, your only chance is to make a full and free confession of all."

Shueyun, in an extacy of terror, fell down on his knees. " Alas ! sir," cried he, " how should I, who am under your worship's especial government, and have my life in your hands, dare to think of deceiving you ! The transactions of yesterday were the result of mere necessity on my part, and involve details which I would gladly explain to your worship, and hope for pardon and indulgence."

" Well," said the magistrate, " sit down here, and let me hear them."

Shueyun rose up immediately, and taking his seat, gave a circumstantial relation of the whole affair from beginning to end, in which he shewed that the expedient of passing off his daughter had originated with his niece, and been adopted by him merely to escape a more dangerous predicament.* He concluded with urging that his daughter, with all her defects, being now the lawful wife of Kwoketsu, might be regarded in some measure as the award of heaven ; and he trusted that his worship would consider her with indulgence.

The

* The Chinese author here details, with the most tedious minuteness, what the reader is already in possession of ; and the latter will probably thank the translator for not following the example of those, who would insert every such useless repetition, for no better reason than because it exists in the original.—" Truly, for mine own part," says honest Dcgberry, " I could find it in my heart to bestow all my tediousness on your worship."

The magistrate could not help listening with delight to the tale of Shueypingsin's prudence and address. "Whence," exclaimed he, "could your niece have acquired such wonderful discretion at her tender years! She is truly worthy of esteem and affection. But though the event has been sufficiently accounted for by your statement, it cannot be expected that the young man should readily submit to such treatment."

"His vexation," said Shueyun, "arises entirely from losing my niece; and had she been disposed of, at the same time that he espoused my daughter, to some other person, the case would be irreparable: but though she has escaped him on this occasion, she yet remains in her primitive single state; and if he is unable to dismiss her from his mind, let me try if I cannot contrive by some means to cajole her yet, in expiation of my past fault.* There is no reason why we may not succeed."

"Well," said the magistrate, who seemed pleased by the proposal, "should she revert to Kwoketsu at last, we will say no more about the matter: but how can you impose upon your niece, with all her penetration?"

"As long as my daughter remained single," replied the other, my niece stood upon her guard, and succeeded
in

* It will be seen that they endeavour to set aside the former marriage by altering the nuptial ticket, which would have reduced Shueyun's daughter from a wife to a concubine. The Chinese author loses no opportunity of placing Shueyun in the most contemptible and ridiculous light, and never more so than on this occasion, where he is made to propose his own daughter's disgrace: so different from the conduct of the scholar Hanyuen, on a similar occasion (p. 32.)

in opposing us ; but quite at ease on that head now, she can hardly be prepared against another stratagem. Let me beg your worship to send for the young man himself, and propose to him an excellent scheme which occurs to me."

The magistrate told him that, in consideration of the zeal he now displayed, no further notice should be taken of the past ; but he had better not play false again, as he could hardly expect a repetition of such lenity. A messenger was then despatched for Kwoketsu, who being made acquainted with the drift of the late conversation, expressed great satisfaction thereat. He told Shueyun that it was not from any wish to treat his daughter lightly, but in consequence of the sense he entertained of his niece's merits, that he still desired to make the latter his wife. " May I ask by what means you propose to effect this ?" added he.

" Simply in this way," replied Shueyun: " do you go back to my daughter, and by your cheerful and satisfied demeanour make her quite easy, until the celebration of the third, sixth, or ninth* day arrives, when you must make great festive preparations, and invite all your friends. Among those of the male sex assembled in the outer hall will be their worships the magistrates ; and among the females, to whom the inner chamber will

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be

* The Chinese have many superstitions relating to the number three and its multiples, particularly nine, in common with other nations.

" *Necte tribus nodis ternos, Amarylli, colores.*"

be devoted, my niece cannot avoid coming, as a near relation. This being effected, you have only to produce the marriage ticket, with her own eight characters inscribed instead of my daughter's, and boldly claim her as your lawful wife, calling on the two magistrates present to settle the question. I myself shall be there to put in a word, and we need have no fear of her escaping us :* why should not my scheme succeed ?”

The young man was delighted, and exclaimed that it was excellent. But the magistrate remarked, that though the plan was not a bad one, he feared Shueypingsin was too cunning to be prevailed on to attend.

“ If she finds the third and sixth days pass without observation,” said the uncle, “ and my daughter seems fairly established in her new home, her suspicions will be entirely lulled ; and when the ninth or twelfth day arrives, there will be stronger reasons for her feeling secure. She can hardly fail to attend.”

The consultation thus ended, the two others took their leave of the magistrate, and having renewed their mutual exhortations, separated each to his own home.

Reason's highway is straight and plain—unlike
The crooked, devious paths of worthless men :
Did not a faultless heroine sometimes shine,
Virtue's great cause entirely would fail !

Kwoketsu proceeded without loss of time to make the requisite preparations at his house ; where we will leave him,

* Literally, ‘ of her flying away up to heaven.’

him, and accompany Shueyun, who on his return went over with a semblance of joy to visit his niece. "Child," exclaimed he, "I wronged you much in what my passion urged me to say yesterday; for unless every thing had happened as you arranged it, we should have been in a terrible condition* to-day!" The young lady disclaimed all pretensions to credit on the occasion, and maintained that nothing whatever had taken place beyond the ordinary rules of propriety. "I was very apprehensive," observed Shueyun, "of evil consequences this morning; but no stir seems to be made about it, and we may hope all parties are disposed to rest satisfied."

"That does not follow," replied his niece; "they may think it useless to resort to unavailing reproaches, and yet be devising some scheme among themselves."

"What schemes should they devise?" said he as he left her—exclaiming to himself at the same time with astonishment, "How comes this young girl to have such a clear insight into character! I very much fear she may yet refuse the invitation."

Three days previous to the twelfth morning of the marriage, five invitation tickets appeared, one for the uncle, three more for his three sons, all of them in the name of Kwoketsu, and a fifth for Shueypingsin, written in the name of her cousin, as both the father and mother of that lady's husband were absent. Shueyun took all

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the

* Literally, 'The skies would have come down upon us.'

the tickets to his niece. "This whole business," said he, laughing, "seems to turn out according to your prediction; our sorrow and perplexity have been converted into joy. There can remain no doubts after this invitation to our whole party to celebrate the marriage. Let us then accept it, and by our personal attendance confirm the union."

"Doubtless," replied his niece, "we must all of us attend."

Shueyun now observed, that instead of going empty-handed, they should send some presents on the day preceding, in order that due notice being thus given, their friends might be prepared. His niece assented to this also, and he presently brought a large red ticket, requesting she would specify such articles as she wished to be procured. Shueypingsin, without the least hesitation, took up a pencil and wrote a long list of presents, which she requested he would take the trouble to provide.

Her uncle now considered the plot as more than half successful, and joyfully conveyed a private notice to Kwoketsu; after which he got a calculator of nativities* to furnish him with the eight characters of his niece, which he likewise conveyed to the young man, with a request that he would have the nuptial ticket altered accordingly. Still he could not help feeling apprehensive lest his niece might

* That is, he gave the professor of astrology the actual date of his niece's birth, and received from him the eight characters which expressed it in the proper form.

might yet change her mind, and went about here and there, prying and eaves-dropping, for the chance of picking up what she said—while Shueypingsin, with her accustomed reserve, uttered not a word.

In the extremity of his anxiety, he sent a request to his daughter that she would, on the day previous to the festivities, despatch two of her women with a particular invitation to Shueypingsin; and accordingly they came, saying that their mistress felt herself under infinite obligations to her cousin for all she had done for her, and most earnestly entreated she would come at an early hour on the following day to receive her acknowledgments in person. “To-morrow being your mistress’s marriage festival,” said Shueypingsin, “I cannot fail to attend and present my congratulations;” then turning to her attendants, she ordered tea to be handed to the two women, and while they were taking it, addressed her conversation to them, inquiring if her cousin were just now engaged in any particular occupation?

“Nothing particular,” replied one of the women. “Yes,” said the other, “she was this morning sewing something on a piece of red silk, but I do not know what they call it.”*

“I sup-

* The ignorance of this attendant, and the incuriosity of her mistress on the subject of what she was working, seem rather strange, as one might imagine that a nuptial ticket must be familiar to all classes. The only way of explaining it, is on the supposition that the use of red silk, with gold letters, in lieu of the usual writing on crimson-coloured paper,

"I suppose they might be gold letters that your mistress was sewing on?" observed Shueypingsin; and when the attendant replied that they were, she turned the conversation at once, and asked no more questions. The two women having drank their tea, she dismissed them, with a repetition of her promise to attend on the following day.

Shueyun, when he heard of this, was exceedingly happy, and by daylight next morning the two attendants again made their appearance, bringing with them a golden casket containing eight large pearls of a fine colour, which they presented to Shueypingsin, telling her these were sent by their mistress for her acceptance. "These beautiful pearls," said the young lady when she had inspected them, "are of such a size and value, that I could not afford to purchase them myself; and if your mistress wishes to bestow them on me, carry them back, and wait until I have seen and spoken to her." The women, not knowing what to do, took their leave with the pearls; and Shueyun immediately came over to ask his niece how many men she would require with the sedan and state umbrella?*

Shueypingsin replied, "that her father being in disgrace with the emperor, it did not become her to use the great sedan and yellow umbrella; and she should, therefore, is uncommon, and exclusively confined to the very highest rank. We have seen before, that the author's drift is to expose to scorn the ignorance of Shueyun and his family with regard to *les convenances*.

* To which she was entitled from her father's rank.

therefore, proceed in a small chair: that on the preceding day, when her tenant at the southern farm brought his rent in grain,* she had engaged two of the country people to carry her; and her uncle need give himself no further trouble.

"What," exclaimed Shueyun, "when Kwoketsu has assembled all his relatives in such state to meet us, should not we too, who have just become allied to his family, observe some state and ceremony? If you go in a shabby sedan, with two bearers, and without the umbrella, will not people laugh at you?"

"Let them laugh," said his niece; "I am determined to do nothing incorrect."

Seeing he could not prevail on her, "Well then," said he, "if you have engaged your chair, we will precede you in a befitting style, and you may follow in any way you please." So saying he went out, and hurried with his three sons to the meeting.

Like rolling grindstones their unsteady plots
Still changing shift;—her's fix'd as rocks remain!
Now this way tend their efforts, and now that,
Devoid of principle.

When Kwoketsu heard that Shueypingsin was really coming, he could not dissemble his joy, but sent repeatedly to the two magistrates, reminding them of their promise to assist him. He had, at the same time, engaged three or four young men of his own violent and unprincipled

* In a country like China, with a small amount of circulating medium, the payment of rent in kind might be expected.

cipléd character to be present on the occasion. The pearls, he wished to pretend, had been received as marriage presents ; and the nuptial ticket, with the date of Shueypingsin's birth in gold letters, was to be produced in proof of the contract. Seven or eight stout waiting-maids were then chosen, and these were instructed, as soon as the young lady left her chair and entered the gate, to surround her, and in case she attempted to do herself any violence, to prevent it. He also prepared one of his most retired apartments in a style of sumptuous elegance, hoping this might have some effect in reconciling her to her situation. Nor did his female emissaries cease going to the house of Shueypingsin from daybreak until noon, about which time messengers came to announce that she had got into her chair ; then presently it was reported that she was half-way, upon which the joy and satisfaction of Kwoketsu were at their height,* and he cried out to the musicians to arrange themselves to the right and left of the great gate, striking up in full band as soon as the chair arrived.

In his impatient anxiety, the young man ran out at the gate to look, and perceived at some distance a small sedan, preceded by four waiting-maids, and followed by a number of men-servants ; the whole appearing to his eyes like the descent of some superior being among mortals. However, he was obliged by decorum to re-enter the house before they reached the gate, and when
the

* Literally, 'his heart's flowers were all full blown.'

the two magistrates heard him say that Shueypingsin was actually coming, they could not help exclaiming to themselves, "What intelligence and penetration did not this young woman display before!—It is a pity she has fallen into the snare at last!"* The chair had by this time reached the gate; and when it was set down, the four waiting-maids displaced the blind in front. Shueypingsin was already half out of the sedan, when the seven or eight women within the gate ran out to assist her, the whole band striking up a loud peal at the same time. Shueypingsin on a sudden changed countenance, and exclaimed, "There is something in that music which persuades me they have laid a trap for my unwariness; if I go in, I shall fall into the snare;" so she instantly re-seated herself, and told her people to be away back in a moment. The two countrymen who bore the sedan had received their instructions, and hardly waited for the order before they had the chair on their shoulders, and were hurrying away home, with the attendants after them.

How near the prey to the fell dragon's jaws!†

—To beard the tiger tempts no common risk!

Like gems and gold, her mind superior shines;

Their plots in naked worthlessness appear.

Kwoketsu,

* They were acting contrary to their duty and inclination, through awe of Kwoketsu's family.

† The allusion is to a huge serpent or dragon, which the Chinese frequently carry in their processions, borne by fifty men—its body hollow, transparent, and full of lights, and having suspended to its nose a ball swinging backwards and forwards.

Kwoketsu, on hearing the band strike up, waited in eager expectation to see her enter, and stole into a corner to catch a passing glimpse ; but to his surprise the music stopped at once, and the seven or eight female attendants ran in to seek him. “ Why does not the lady come in ?” said he, advancing to meet them. They told him how Shueypingsin had ordered the chair home upon hearing the band, with her speech on the occasion. “ And you did not detain her ?” cried he, stamping with rage.—They replied, that he could not have stopped her himself, she went away in such a hurry !

People were instantly sent in pursuit of the chair, but it was already far beyond their reach. Kwoketsu stood for a moment stupified with rage and vexation, and then rushing into the hall, told the magistrates what had happened. They heard it with astonishment, though not without some secret satisfaction. “ This young woman, is really a wonder,” said the Chefoo, “ to discover your intentions at once from the sound of the music !” Then turning to Shueyun, he inquired if his niece had any skill in divination ?* “ She used to read learned books with her father,” replied he, “ and to predict good or ill-fortune ; though we paid no regard to what

* The most common mode of divination among the Chinese is by means of wooden slips, inscribed with characters, and tossed on the ground at random. This custom is described almost to the letter by Tacitus in his account of the Germans ;—“ Sortium consuetudo simplex ; virgam frugiferæ arbori decidam in surculos amputant, eosque notis quibusdam discretos super candidam vestem temere ac fortuito spargunt.”—*Germ. x.*

what she said ; on this occasion, however, she seems to have divined rightly to our cost."

The whole party present expressed their surprise and admiration. As for Kwoketsu, he could not give up all thoughts of her yet, but despatched two females with a message, "that they were all waiting for the young lady to assist at the celebration of the twelfth day ;—that he himself had no intentions distinct from this,—why then so suddenly run away from the gate?"

Shueypingsin, however, sent them back with this answer : "I went to your lord's house without hesitation, confident of his good intentions, and little suspecting his designs against myself. I am now certain of the forgery of the nuptial ticket, and of his scheme regarding the pearls ; not to mention the presence of the two magistrates on the occasion. Had the music not happily warned me, I might by this time have been caught in the snare. Go and present my most profound respects to your lord,—let him be contented with the wife that he has got, for he and I were never intended to come together, and he had better give up such foolish schemes and idle imaginations for the future."

The guests, on hearing this, renewed their expressions of admiration, and declared that the young lady was no ordinary person. When they had talked together confusedly for some time, and agreed that nothing more could be done, the entertainment

was

was served up, and the company departed to their houses.

Kwoketsu, however, in the bitterness of his disappointment, detained Shueyun. "I suspect," said he, "that your niece, talented as she is, and allowing her to be something more than human, could never have obtained this knowledge without assistance. You certainly have been leagued with her against me!"

In the utmost tribulation at such a charge, Shueyun fell down on his knees before heaven, and uttered this imprecation. "If I have been leagued with my niece to deceive you, may my whole house be involved in misery with myself!"*

"Then," said the other, hastily raising him from the ground, "if it be true that she has acted for herself on this occasion, I declare to you honestly, that her talents are an additional reason why I will never give her up!"

"My good son," exclaimed Shueyun, "if you will not give her up, at least cease to persecute me!—though I have still a desperate scheme in store, which you may try."

"What is that?" inquired his son-in-law.

"The 20th of the 9th moon," replied he, "is the anniversary of her mother's death,† when my niece never fails to proceed to the tomb near the southern farm,

* Literally, *Tsaou wun*, 'catch the pest.'

† Called *Keshin*, 'hateful, or dreadful hour.'

farm, to sacrifice, and perform the sepulchral rites. Her rents are at the same time presented to her, and she passes a portion of the day in visiting the flower gardens. This is so established a custom with her, that not a year passes without her repeating it: do you then, when the day arrives, mount a fast horse, and ordering your people to conceal themselves near the southern farm, wait until she has performed the oblations, and is returning home, when you may disperse her attendants and carry her off to your own house. I leave it to you to settle the plan with your own people; and whether it fails or succeeds, pray remember that you are not to persecute me farther on this subject."

"Good! good!" exclaimed the young man in the same breath; "the plan is straight-forward and easy, and shall be adopted:—but suppose the day proves stormy, she may perhaps not go?"

"My niece," answered Shueyun, "has such a filial regard for her mother's memory, that let the weather be what it may, she is sure to go." His son-in-law was delighted to hear this, and their plans being settled, they parted.

Let not presumptuous mortals hope t'obtain
A goddess—but beware the iron scourge
Of the avenging power!—Still unreform'd,
He madly holds his course—still dares to feed
His liquorish hopes!

We leave Kwoketsu to prepare his enterprize, and
accompany

accompany Shueyun, who on reaching home went over to see his niece. "How could you come to the door," said he, "and then hurry away again so strangely, while people were actuated by the best intentions? You not only destroyed the festivity of the meeting, but involved me in the suspicion of being a party to such rudeness."

"It is needless for me," replied Shueypingsin, "to discuss the young man's intentions, since they are best known to himself."

Here Shueyun joined his palms together, and exclaimed, "I swear by the god Fō himself, that you do him wrong! He had no intention to-day except to bring the family together; I can vouch for the probity of his conduct."*

"When I heard the three beats of the drum," said his niece, "I was aware some deep scheme must be in agitation; and though I have succeeded in foiling him this time, I feel certain that he will not give up the pursuit until he has made another attempt or two. You will learn hereafter that I did him no injury by my suspicion."

Shueyun had not a word to say in reply; but, confounded and abashed, slunk away home as quick as he could.

On

* By this oath he is made to appear at once in an odious and a ridiculous light, as he not only asseverates to what is false, but betrays his subservience to a superstition which is pretty generally despised among the Chinese. The sequel will shew the author's opinion of the priests of Fō, or Buddha.

On the morning of the 20th, Shueypingsin failed not to proceed with all the requisite preparations to perform the sepulchral rites at her mother's tomb.* On the preceding day she had invited her uncle to accompany her, with his three sons; but he, considering within himself that the seizure of his niece must necessarily be followed by some trouble, and that if he went in person, part of the responsibility might attach to himself, told her that he should be confined to the house by business of consequence.

"Well then," said she, "if you cannot go yourself, why not let my three cousins attend me?"

"The two elder," replied Shueyun, "have business at home; but the youngest may go and perform the rites with you." This being settled, he privately informed Kwoketsu of his motives for staying away—adding, that his youngest son might be found useful as a spy† on the occasion.

The southern farm being about four miles distant from the city, the young lady rose at daylight to prepare herself, having a large state chair ready, closed on the four sides with dark blinds, together with the yellow umbrella to lead the way. Four waiting maids followed in as many small sedans, and the young cousin, with some attendants, brought up the rear on horseback.

In

* These are detailed in the drama called 'an heir in old age,' translated by the author of the present version.

† Literally, 'an ear and eye.'

In this order they proceeded leisurely on their way to perform the sepulchral rites.

In the clear mirror the flow'r-spangled sprig
 Reflected blooms—the moon's pale image lurks
 In the bright wave—to mock the gazer's grasp!
 Each effort vainly spent, his prey remains
 Intangible, as shadows in the stream.

On the arrival of Shueypingsin at the farm, her tenant opened the gate, and conducted her chair straight to the principal room, upon which the door was closed, and the attendants on horseback remained without the enclosure. The farmer's wife brought in tea, and when Shueypingsin and her young cousin had partaken of it, the young lady inquired if all things were prepared at the tomb? The woman replied that all was ready; upon which she rose, and proceeded with her cousin to the sepulchre at the back of the farm, where they made the proper offerings to the departed, and burnt the gilt paper.

The rites being ended, Shueypingsin went to visit a pavilion on the west side of the farm, to view the beds of crysanthemum* in full bloom. To the east and west were two lofty summer-houses, of which the eastern was surrounded with young peach trees, for the sake of their blossoms in spring;† and the western pavilion, being

* The crysanthemum Indicum (Keüh hwa) is esteemed by the Chinese on account of the variety of its colours, and towards winter the curious in flowers display large collections of this gaudy plant round their houses.

† There are two annual periods for visiting the tombs, corresponding nearly

being intended for autumnal visits, was provided in like manner with large collections of the crysanthemum. It was now autumn, and the young lady paid her visit to the latter, admiring the abundant richness and beauty of the flowers, which spread around the base of the building like a variegated carpet of gold.

Their slender shadows fill the enclosure, and a scattered scent pervades the flower-beds, planted in triple rows: the deeper and lighter tints reflect a yellow light, and the leaves shine varied from beneath the drops of dew. Each hungry flowret inhales the passing breeze, as it sheds around its incomparable lustre. The gazer sympathizes with the languishing blossoms, bending their heads all faint and delicate: the mournful view awakes in his mind thoughts suitable to autumn. Say not that it is a sight to satiate the eyes of the indifferent beholder—know that such flowers as these once inspired the poet Taouyuenming, as he indulged his genius amidst verses and wine.*

When she had admired the crysanthemums, Shuey-pingsin took a view of the country on the four sides of the pavilion, and observed the country people busily

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occupied

nearly to the equinoxes, and those who cannot go in the spring (which is the principal occasion), are expected to attend in autumn.

* Taouyuenming flourished towards the conclusion of the Tsin dynasty. He was celebrated for his contempt of every thing but literature and ease, in which he indulged his whole life, amidst flowers, willows, and wine.

occupied with the autumnal harvest.* To her surprise, however, she perceived two idle-looking fellows standing by the side of a mat shed, gazing at the people carrying the grain. Struck by this circumstance, she looked round and perceived three more, seated on a heap of straw on the west side of the building, who, on finding that they were observed, immediately rose. On the other side of the wall, too, she caught a glimpse of her cousin, deeply engaged in conversation with a young man in a blue dress. She instantly suspected some mischief was in agitation—but said not a word.

In a short time the farmer's wife invited her to take some refreshment within, and the young lady, descending from the pavilion, sent a message to her cousin to come and partake of it. When the repast was over, the latter urged their departure, proposing that, as they had nothing more to do, they should return home immediately. "Do you amuse yourself a little while longer," said Shueypingsin, "I must give directions to the different tenants, and obtain from them some arrears of rent." When he was gone, she first settled with the people, whom having dismissed, she retired with her females to a small back-room, and seating herself there, made them turn all the clothes out of a leathern box, which was immediately filled with broken stones and rubbish, collected for her by a trusty domestic who was called in to assist. The box was then quietly deposited under

* There is a summer harvest, in contradistinction.

under the seat of the state chair; a large stone was next bundled up in some clothes, and placed upon the seat itself; after which the door of the chair was locked, and the blinds carefully secured on all sides. The faithful domestics being then called in, and properly instructed, Shueypingsin dressed herself like one of her maids, and stepped into a small chair, the girl whose place she occupied being secretly left at the farm-house, with a charge to the tenant to send her home afterwards.

Every thing duly arranged, the doors were thrown open, and the chair-bearers summoned. These immediately entered from the enclosure, and each set of men going to their proper chair, and taking it up as before, carried it out; while the umbrella-bearer led the way, and the cousin followed on horseback attended by the servants.

They had not proceeded above a bow-shot from the farm, when between ten and twenty fellows started up in various directions, two from one side and three from another, some of whom laid hold on the state-chair, while others began to belabour the carriers. "This is our ground," cried they, "what right have you to interfere with our livelihood?"* The four chairmen being beaten away from their load, an equal number of the assailants took it up on their shoulders, and ran away at full speed: upon which the mounted at-

H 2

tendants

* To every district there are porters attached, who have a sort of monopoly in their own boundary, by way of recompense for doing all government work gratis.

tendants in the rear galloped after them, exclaiming, "Ruffian slaves, it is the daughter of the President Shueykeuyih that you are carrying off in this insolent manner!" The others, however, only ran the faster, and when the pursuers had nearly reached them, Kwoketsu, who was on horseback under some fir trees by the road side, with a party of mounted followers, threw himself in the way. "That young lady," cried he, "is my bride—what do you mean by detaining her?"

They pulled up in haste, and replied, "We did not know it was you, sir; but followed, lest our neglect should displease our lady."

"Go away home," said he, waving his hand, "I will be answerable for all consequences." With this he gave his horse the whip, and rode forwards with his attendants towards the sedan. The servants of Shueypingsin, being in her secret, were glad to borrow this pretext for joining their young mistress in the small chair, and quietly attending her in safety to her home.

As for Kwoketsu, he escorted the state sedan in joy and exultation into the city—but to see his joy converted into rage, and his exultation into shame, it will be necessary to read the next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

“ THE GENEROUS HERO ARRAIGNS A PUBLIC TRIBUNAL,
AND TO SAVE ANOTHER, HAZARDS HIMSELF.”

Like the sea-monster now would he devour
His prey ; now seize her like the robber bird ;
Thus fertile are the base in foul devices !
They reckon not that when destiny's decree
Forbids success, their best laid schemes are vain !
They came and found her ; but misfortune cross'd
Their homeward course—so enmities arise
In narrow paths—though had not tangled grass
Beset the way, perchance th' unrivall'd pair
Had ne'er been match'd !

SINCE the first arrangement of his scheme in concert with Shueyun, Kwoketsu, in order to secure the possession of the young lady after he had stolen her, engaged the assistance of the two magistrates, who it was settled should be present on the occasion, and place the matter beyond dispute by the inspection of the nuptial ticket. He did not neglect, at the same time, to invite a crowd of relations and friends, that they might witness his triumphant possession of the prize after such disappointments.

In all the pride of success he reached the gate of his own dwelling, and as the chair-bearers waited his directions, he waved his hand and bade them carry the sedan into the house, repeating his orders until they had

had passed the vestibule, and got as far as the raised platform in the great hall, where it was placed down. The Chefoo and those present received him as he entered, and told him that they wished him joy in proportion to the difficulties he had experienced in the pursuit of his bride. Kwoketsu stalked up in triumph to the two magistrates, and making them a slight bow, "I am not conscious," said he, "of any thing contrary to rule on this occasion, for the person to whom I was affianced is in reality Shueypingsin—here is the nuptial ticket in evidence. The deceit which was practised on me—the substitution of a stalk for a flower—I could hardly be expected to endure contentedly, and was therefore compelled to use this violence in my own right. Let me beg your worships to decide on my claim."

They both replied together, that they had not been well acquainted with the commencement* of these espousals, and it was unnecessary to recapitulate now,—that as he had merely brought to pass what should have been effected before, there could be no violation of propriety; and they accordingly desired him to forget his former disappointments, and hasten to enjoy his present good fortune.

"No," replied the young man, "that may not be; a want of formality might give this young lady herself
ground

* From its irregularity, they were desirous to be as ignorant as possible on the subject.

ground of complaint ; let every form be publicly observed, to prevent disputes between ourselves hereafter."

"Very well," said the magistrates, "let the sedan be opened, and request the young lady to appear and speak for herself."

Kwoketsu called some of the women to open the sedan ; but when they attempted to obey, they found the door fastened with a small padlock, and informed him.

"Oh, that is a trifle !" cried he, and walking up to the chair, twisted off the padlock. The women then proceeded to unclosethe door, into which they looked, and opening it wider and wider, stared at each other in astonishment, without being able to utter a word. Kwoketsu, seeing them all gazing in motionless stupidity, began to chide. "Idiot slaves ! make haste and hand the lady out ;—why do you stand gaping there ?"

They answered in trepidation, that there was no lady for them to hand ! and the young man rushed to the front of the sedan, into which he looked, and perceived nothing on the seat but a great yellow bundle—not a shadow of any living person ! In an ecstasy of rage and disappointment he stamped with his feet, and exclaimed ; "Did I not see her plainly in the pavilion ? and yet this young girl has again foiled me ;—it is really detestable !"

The

The magistrates and all present walked up to the chair, into which they looked, and, seeing it empty, exclaimed in accents of astonishment, "This young woman must doubtless be something more than human!" They turned to Kwoketsu, and advised him to give up all farther thoughts of her, for her actions were so mysterious, and so nearly resembled those of unembodied spirits, that she could not be regarded as an ordinary mortal. Stupified with vexation and shame, Kwoketsu became unable to utter a word; he could only hang down his head and sigh, while the first magistrate directed that the yellow bundle and the trunk should be taken out of the chair and examined. On finding the contents of these to be nothing but a parcel of stones, the guests all burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, and when they had ended a confused sort of consultation, in which it was discovered that nothing could be done, the party dropped off one after the other.

A single person remained behind, a particular friend of Kwoketsu, named Chingkee, who had the freedom of his house. He sat quietly in his seat when the rest had taken their leave, and his friend, going up to him, observed despondingly, "that well as every thing had been concerted for this day's enterprize, it had ended in complete disappointment. Surely there must be something in his destiny to prevent the union!"

"It

“It will be time enough to say that,” replied the other, “when you find it impossible to effect your object; though were it already effected, I would not vouch for its being a predestined union. In common cases, gentle means are used to induce compliance; but as you have power on your side, and can carry her off without fearing any body, the thing may be easily brought about—why vex yourself?”

“Alas!” said Kwoketsu, “do not regard it as so easy a matter! To run away with her requires no ordinary invention, for she is so completely immured in her house, and so rarely ventures out, that let me possess all possible ingenuity, there is no opportunity for its exertion.”

“Yes,” answered his friend, “the present situation of her father affords you an excellent opportunity.” Being asked to explain himself, he continued—“I understand it is a great while since she heard any news of her father in exile, and being of a filial disposition, she cannot but wish earnestly for his recall. Do you then prepare on a sheet of red paper a fictitious report, declaring that he has been graciously recalled by his Majesty at the recommendation of the College of Censors, and restored to office. You may send ten or twenty persons* with this straight to her house,

* It is commonly a part of the punishment of exile to prohibit all communication between the banished person and those whom he leaves behind, though the relations are sometimes permitted to accompany the exile.

house, as if in search of a reward for the joyful intelligence. Should she scruple even then to leave her apartments, they may pretend that they bring a declaration of pardon from the emperor himself, and call on her to receive it. Her joy on such an occasion might well deprive her of foresight; but when she hears of the imperial grant, she cannot venture to do otherwise than come forth to pay the customary respect. A chair being prepared, let her be shut up in it at once and carried off—her ingenuity can scarcely avail her on such an occasion.”

“It is a good scheme!” exclaimed the other, interrupting him with delight.

“Yes,” continued Chingkee; “but I fear it may involve us in some trouble.”

“In what trouble should it involve us?” inquired Kwoketsu confidently.

“She is of a distinguished family,” replied his friend; “this forcible abduction, if you take her straight home, may have such an effect on her determined temper as to drive her to some desperate remedy. You, however, and the magistrates *are one*,* begin

* The expression is a vulgarism, but inserted here as being a parallel idiom with the original. A curious collection might be made of such little analogies between the Chinese and other languages: as *Lun tso*, ‘to do any thing by rotation;’ *Yin taou*, ‘to lead the way;’ *Ta tsew foong*, ‘to raise the wind’—to seek a favour or advantage; *Kan king*, ‘to view lightly;’ *Tsing nën*, ‘of green age’—young; *Shin meih*, ‘very thick’ with a person; *Ta tsing shin*, ‘à grand matin;’ *Laou shě*, ‘prisca fides;’ *Kae kwo keang*, ‘vertere modum—palinodiam canere,’ &c. &c.

begin by addressing them, and carry her afterwards to their respective tribunals, procuring from the superior one a reply to your address, to declare that she was properly affianced to you, and that therefore you may carry her home. Thus you will be quite safe."

"Better and better still!" exclaimed the other, overjoyed at the fair promise of this plot; and when they had talked the matter over they separated.

Scarce has one villany been foil'd, another
Starts in its place—what peace is there for man!
Such pitfalls might a woman's weakness well
Have stumbled—trials meet for th' other sex!

Shueypingsin, ever since her happy escape from the last danger, had resolved, for the greater security, to close her doors against every one, not excepting even her own sex. As for her uncle, who so positively asserted that there was no evil intention on the part of Kwoketsu, and whom the event had proved to be an accomplice with him—even he did not pay her many visits. Nothing now disturbed the young lady's quiet except the recollection of her father,—of whom she had received no intelligence for such a length of time, and whose uncertain fate could not but fill her with anxiety.

She had one morning just finished dressing, when her ear was struck by a loud uproar at the outer gate, and she was told that a number of persons had rushed in, bringing with them a great red paper, which
they

they fixed up aloft in the hall, bawling out at the same time that her father had received the imperial pardon and was restored to office, and that they came in search of a reward with the joyful intelligence. Some of them added that they had got the imperial edict, and invited her to come forth and read it. The noise and confusion were so great, that she could learn nothing clearly on the subject, and the young lady therefore proceeded to the apartment at the back of the great hall to obtain a peep at what was going on. Without exposing herself to view, she perceived from thence the red paper fixed up, and several persons proposing that she should come forth and hear the edict read.

Fearful of any disrespect towards his majesty's mandate, she walked out at once into the hall, attended by two of her females, and had scarcely arrived there, before she was surrounded by the whole party of strangers, some of them exclaiming, "The imperial edict is at the magistrate's; let the young lady go thither to hear it." Hardly was this uttered, before a chair was introduced from the outside, and she was invited to get in.

The whole truth now flashed upon Shueypingsin,—who, however, lost none of her presence of mind, but stood erect in the midst of the hall, and without changing colour in the least, addressed the people thus in her usual tone of voice: "Do not be violent,
but

but listen to what I say. You have been sent hither by your master to carry me to his house, and must be aware that, so far from being actuated by any enmity towards me, he wishes to make me his wife. The means he uses for the attainment of his end are the mere consequence of my former incomppliance. If I now yield to his wishes, however, I become his wife, and at the same time your mistress ; and should you offer me any indignity, I shall not fail to visit you with punishment hereafter, when you cannot plead that you received no warning."

It happened that Chingkee was among the crowd, and he immediately replied, " Lady, what you say is an admirable proof of your prudence and foresight ; but it is unnecessary on this occasion, for who present would dare to subject you to any indignity ?"

" Well then," said Shueypingsin, " pray let the people stand aside a little, while I prepare my dress for going out, and give the requisite orders to my servants."

They immediately obeyed, and extended the circle in which she stood ; upon which the young lady desired her females to bring some addition to her dress, and whispering in the ear of one of them directed her to conceal a small dagger with its sheath in the sleeve of her gown. This done, she again addressed herself to those present. " If you wish to obtain the good-will of your master, attend to what I am going to direct ;" and being assured by Chingkee that they would obey her

her commands, she proceeded: "this union has certainly been very contrary to my inclinations, but the earnestness with which Kwoketsu has thrice sought it, though in opposition to strict rules, has at least proved the sincerity of his attachment, and I cannot bring myself to give him a peremptory refusal. If, however, after surprising me in this manner, you were to carry me straight to his house, it would be so clandestine and indecent a proceeding, that I would rather die than give my consent: better, then, take me first to the two magistrates, and should they approve of the match, it will no longer bear such an irregular and disgraceful aspect; and when we reach the house of Kwoketsu, I may perhaps be induced to listen to his proposals."

This agreed very well with their instructions, and Chingkee therefore replied, that they would do exactly as she desired, requesting her at the same time to enter the sedan. Shueypingsin gave some farther directions to her servants, and took with her only a couple of female attendants, and two boys to follow the chair; though she privately directed a trusty domestic to take down the great red paper from the hall, and bring it after her to the magistrate's. That done, she cheerfully stepped into the sedan.

The prodigies she view'd with fearless eye,
 She heard the thunders with undaunted ear:
 Say ye to men's device a victim she
 Must fall?—The demons own their cunning vain!

When

When the emissaries of Kwoketsu had fairly got possession of the young lady, they felt as glad as if they had performed some grand exploit, and the whole twenty or thirty of them hurried along with her towards the magistrates, like a flight of crows or swallows on the wing. Confident in the power and influence of the master whom they served, they were speeding along in this manner, without regarding any obstacles, when it was fated they should fall in with Teihchungyu, who had lately entered the province of Shantung* on his travels, and was riding along leisurely upon his mule, with Seaoutan following him. It was in the act of turning a corner, without being prepared for such a concussion, that he was suddenly met and nearly thrown from his mule by those who were carrying the chair. Irritated by the violence of the blow, he leaped down, and stopping the first chair-bearer by grasping hold of his body, exclaimed, "Villainous slaves, is this a case of fire or sudden death to justify your tearing along thus at mid-day, as if in chase of a thief? Know you who it is you have nearly knocked down?—what do you mean by this conduct?"

The followers all ran up to the front in a body, and being stopped by the youth, began to bawl out together at him. Some of them demanded who he was, and how

* In the original it is printed *Honan*, an evident mistake, as he is said before to have resolved on going to *Shantung*, which is the scene of the present incident. The text abounds in misprints, and the translator's copy was carefully corrected by a native.

how he dared to stop the marriage procession of the son of a minister of state; while others cried out, "Whoever you are, come along with us to the magistrate's, where you shall be properly handled."*

Still more incensed at such insolence, Teihchungyu demanded, "If this is a state marriage, where are the lanterns and the music?—No, no! it is plain you are carrying off somebody by force. Come to the Chehëen, and let us hear the truth."

Chingkee, who was concealed among the crowd, now came forward, and perceiving from the youth's striking exterior that he was a person of rank and station, went up and remonstrated with him quietly; "It was a mere accident," said he, "not worth notice. I observe from your speech, sir, that you are a stranger here, and can have no concern with this matter: pray let the people go on."

Teihchungyu now felt really disposed to loosen his hold, but was prevented by a voice from within the chair, which exclaimed in accents of distress: "I am suffering violent wrong, and rely on your bravery for succour!"

"So,"

* In the original he states his name, and the others make some contemptuous puns on it, an attempt to render which may be well dispensed with, considering the difficulty of conveying a *jeu de mots* from even an *European* language, which has generally some kind of affinity with our own. They tell him that 'if he were *gold* or *jewels*, much less *iron* (his name), let him go to the magistrates, and he should be beaten to fragments.'

"So," cried he, resuming his grasp, "it is just as I said! Do not think I am going to let you pass; but make haste and bring the chair to the magistrate's."

Seeing that he would not let them go on, the fellows thronged up in a body, and tried to force him aside: but the youth laid about him in such good earnest, that he sent them flying in every direction. Chingkee now interfered in great trepidation: "Do not use violence, sir," cried he, "this affair has already arrived at a point that will not admit of its being passed over. It matters not your going to the magistrate's now, for whether you go or not, I doubt if the family you have insulted will submit to such treatment. Release the chair quietly, and allow us to proceed."

Teihchungyu, however, paid no attention to him, and being already close to the Chehëen's office, they contrived after some trouble to reach the gate. Here for the first time the youth relaxed his grasp, and walking up to the stand on which the great drum was placed, took his whip and struck a loud and continued peal. The attendants of the office, alarmed by the sound, rushed out in a body and surrounded him. "Who are you," cried they, "that dare thus to strike the drum; make haste in before his worship."

The magistrate had been prepared to give audience to those who were carrying off Shueypingsin, and to award her by his sentence to Kwoketsu. Being ready seated in court, he was somewhat surprised when,

instead of seeing the young lady whom he expected, he heard the drum beat, and presently after observed his people bringing in a person in a scholar's dress, whom they pointed out as the appellant.* That person, however, instead of kneeling on his introduction, or offering any other token of profound respect, merely raised his joined hands, and saluted the magistrate as among equals. The latter upon this demanded who he might be, and for what reason he had struck the drum?

"Who I am, sir," replied Teihchungyu, "you need not inquire, nor is there any necessity for me to answer. But I fell in, on the road, with a case of violent oppression and wrong, at which I felt so shocked as to take the liberty of striking the drum. I have to beg your worship's interference to adjust it, and to ascertain what is the real nature of the transaction;—I shall at the same time have an opportunity of observing how your worship administers justice."

The Chehëen, perceiving something in the appearance and speech of Teihchungyu which excited his apprehensions, did not venture to be hasty with him, but asked with troubled voice and countenance what was the case of oppression he alluded to?—Before there was time for a reply the whole party of Kwoketsu's people were

* A drum is placed at the door of every magistrate's office, to secure a reception to appeals from the people in urgent cases. Such appeals, however (and they lie *gradatim* from the lowest tribunal up to the Emperor himself) are always attended with great hazard, as they subject the appellant to severe punishment should his case be deemed frivolous or inadmissible.

were thronging in ; but Shueypingsin had not yet shewn herself in court, when Chingkee took occasion to pass himself off for a domestic of his friend, and going up to the magistrate, addressed him thus : “ Our master Kwoketsu has long since been engaged to marry the young lady whom we have brought hither ; but she changed her mind, and wished to break off the match, for which reason we have been commanded to convey the lady before your worship, and, first obtaining your sanction, carry her home for the completion of the marriage.”

“ Well,” replied the magistrate, “ that being the case, it is right that the match be solemnized forthwith ; why appeal to me ?—Do not bring the lady in, but carry her home at once.”

Chingkee upon this turned short round, and stopped the people from entering, telling them they had his worship’s sanction for the marriage. But Shueypingsin, who had reached the middle of the passage leading into court, finding she was to be prevented from entering, called out aloud that she was wronged, and ran a few paces forward ; upon which the attendants placed their weapons across, saying that the order had been given to depart, and she must obey it.

Perceiving the situation she was reduced to, and that they wanted to hurry her off, Shueypingsin sat down on the floor, and exclaimed loud enough to be heard in court : “ It is your duty, as the people’s parent,* to redress

* The Chehëen is called ‘ the father and mother ’ of his district.

redress their wrongs, instead of thus turning a deaf ear to their complaints."

The Chehëen persisted in ordering her to be taken away, when Teihchungyu, losing all patience, started up fiercely with a voice of thunder, and rushing towards the table, extended his arm towards the tribunal as he exclaimed: "Most stupid and worthless magistrate that you are, thus to listen, in this hall of public justice, to only one side of the question—thus to repress the complaints of the injured! Such iniquity is quite unparalleled. You might play these tricks with impunity were there nobody greater than a Chehëen in the empire; but you shall find that there are authorities above you who will not suffer it to pass."

Finding himself rated in this humiliating style, the Chehëen became incensed in his turn, and striking the table with his hand, exclaimed, "What man are you, that dare thus to give a loose to your insolence in the emperor's public court?"

Teihchungyu replied to this with a loud laugh: "A mighty high court, truly, must it be in my estimation! who to rescue the oppressed have broken into a noble's sanctuary, conferred on him by the emperor himself, while nobody dared to charge me with insolence."

Now it so happened that this magistrate, who had not long filled his present situation, being in the neighbourhood of Peking when Teihchungyu performed his exploit, was well acquainted with the circumstances,
and

and his consternation was not small at meeting him on such an occasion as this. "Sir," exclaimed he in an altered tone, you must doubtless be the eldest son of the Censor Teihying?"

"As you seem not to be unacquainted with me," replied the young man, "this knowledge may perhaps serve to restrain you in your unjust acts."

The Chehëen hurried up from his seat. "The fame of your deeds, sir," said he with a profound obeisance, "reached me like the distant sound of the spring thunder. I regret that I never had the advantage of seeing you before, and that our first meeting should be under such circumstances; I trust, nevertheless, to clear up this unpleasant subject, if you will only have a little patience with me." He then invited the youth to take the guest's seat, while those at the door brought in tea; and when they had drank together, the magistrate continued: "You are, no doubt, aware that throughout this business I have been influenced by no personal advantage, but obliged to give way to Kwoketsu's family influence."

"It was entirely by accident," replied Teihchungyu, "that I fell in with these people. I am wholly unacquainted with every circumstance relating to them. It is to your worship, therefore, that I must look for information."

The magistrate expressed his astonishment, and said he had taken it for granted that Teihchungyu came
thither

thither on purpose, with the full previous knowledge of what had happened. After paying the youth a compliment on his disinterested exertions in favour of persons in no way connected with himself, he proceeded to inform him who Shueypingsin was, and how Kwoketsu, in love with her beauty, had determined to get possession of her: in what manner her uncle had tried to force her consent, and the art with which she had substituted his daughter's nuptial ticket instead of her own;—then the stratagem of inviting her to a feast, and the way in which she escaped, even after reaching the door;—and lastly, the adventure at the southern farm, with the capture of a heap of stones instead of the young lady.

Teihchungyu was charmed with the history of such admirable address and ingenuity, and his heart was touched in favour of so much excellence in a young girl. “According to your worship's account,” said he, “she must surely be allied to the extraordinary characters of whom we read in remote antiquity: take no more rash steps regarding her, for she is not so easily to be gained;” and, so saying, without regarding the magistrate, he rose up hastily and walked towards the entrance, where Shueypingsin still remained, to observe her. He then found that her beauty fully corresponded with what he had just heard of the excellent qualities of her mind.

“*With the delicacy of a flower, her complexion displayed*

played a clear brilliancy which put to shame the bright radiance of the day: with the buoyant lightness of the swallow, her movements were ordered with inimitable grace and propriety. The arches of her brows were like the outlines of the vernal hills in the distance; but in their changeful expression, they shamed the varying tints of even the vernal hills. The brightness of her eyes equalled that of the clear wave in autumn; but the living sentiment which flowed from them made you wonder how the autumnal wave had lost its deity. Her waist, like a thread in fineness, seemed ready to break—yet was it straight and erect, nor feared the fanning breeze: the shadowy graces of her person it was as difficult to delineate, as the form of the white bird rising from the ground by moonlight. The natural gloss of her hair resembled the bright polish of a mirror, without the false assistance of unguents: her face was perfectly lovely in itself, and needed not paint to adorn it. The native intelligence of her mind seemed to have gathered strength from retirement; and beholding her, you might know she was of a superior order of beings: the cold and rigid strictness of her manners, severe as she herself was soft and delicate, proved her to be no ordinary inhabitant of the female apartments. Her sweet and feminine disposition, comparable to fragrant flowers, might lead one at first to class her with other fair ones: but the perfection of this pearl, the polish of this gem, discoverable*

* Called Lühshin.

coverable on a longer acquaintance, proved that she possessed qualities not inferior to the most spirited of the opposite sex."

Struck by her appearance, Teihchungyu advanced a few steps forward, and with a low inclination said, "Lady, or rather goddess descended to mix with mortals, pardon my blindness and ignorance in not sooner discovering you—but I have just heard the recital of your admirable prudence and address in escaping former dangers, and am unable to comprehend how you at last fell into the power of these wretches*—may I entreat that you will inform me?"

Shueypingsin rose quickly at his approach, and returning his salutation, replied: "While my father's unhappy exile was the constant subject of my thoughts, I was suddenly informed that a copy of the emperor's gracious pardon had arrived. Unable to imagine that any person could be so rash as to counterfeit this, I came out to receive it, and fell into their snare." With this she produced her concealed dagger, and holding it up, continued, "I was aware of the desperate nature of my situation, and therefore prepared to sacrifice my life when it came to the worst; but having met with so valiant a deliverer as yourself, the day of my expected death has been converted into a renewal of existence."

"But what was this copy of the imperial pardon?"

inquired

* Literally, 'rats.'

inquired the astonished youth ; upon which the young lady desired one of her females to take the red paper from the domestic whom she had secretly charged with the same, and present it for Teihchungyu's inspection. The latter, when he had looked over it, walked towards the magistrate, and asked him if it were true or counterfeit ; but he declared his total ignorance of the existence of such a document, and inquired from whence it came ? Teihchungyu, who supposed that he was pretending ignorance, put the paper into his sleeve.* “ It was sufficiently iniquitous,” exclaimed he with indignation, “ to practice force upon a young lady of high rank :—but to counterfeit the imperial command !—I shall proceed early on the morrow to the governor of the province—These culprits your worship must be answerable for : beware lest they escape.”

He then prepared to depart, but the magistrate, in great trepidation, detained him. “ I entreat, sir, that you will not be precipitate ;—stop, I beg, until I have examined these people, and obtained some clue to the subject.” With that he ordered Chingkee and the rest to be brought in. “ Ye band of wretched slaves,”† cried he, “ where does this paper come from ?”

They

* Literally, “sleeved it,” as we say to *pocket* any thing. It is an advantageous feature of the Chinese language thus frequently to make a verb of the substantive.

† Orig. “Ignorant if you be dead or alive,” to express the danger they stood in.

They stared at each other in consternation, but said not a word: upon which the magistrate ordered the ancle-pressers* to be brought, and the prisoners, hearing this terrible sentence, exclaimed altogether, "It has nothing to do with us, sir, but was prepared by Kwoketsu, who ordered us to fix it up."

"I believe that to be true," said his worship, "and shall refrain from beating you just now, guilty slaves as you are, from respect to my honoured guest;" so saying, he ordered them away into safe custody, and at the same time directed his people to provide a commodious chair, and carry the young lady safely back to her own house.

His domestics were then commanded to prepare a repast, to which Teihchungyu was intreated to stay. He, seeing Shueypingsin was secure from her persecutors, felt a degree of joy and satisfaction which led him to assent easily to the Chehëen's request, and he took his share of the wine. His host then seized the occasion to address him as follows: "Though the counterfeit pardon is the act of Kwoketsu, it is not likely that his father has any knowledge of it; should you make a stir, however, before the provincial authorities, the consequences will attach not only to the young man himself, but extend necessarily to his

* Three sticks joined triangularly. The leg being introduced, and the ends of two of the sticks drawn together by cords, severe pain is occasioned. Smaller sticks are used to squeeze women's fingers, in forcing evidence.

his father. For this reason, sir, I beg that you will consider the case again before you proceed to act upon it."

"My concern in this business," replied the young man, "is entirely the result of accident, and I interfered for no other purpose than to afford succour to the injured lady; but if Kwoketsu can give up his pursuit of her altogether, I do not even know him by sight, and can therefore have no object in pushing the matter farther."

The Chehëen was overjoyed at this, and exclaimed, "I admire your principles, sir, in carrying your interference no farther than is necessary."* When they had sat and drank for some time longer, Teihchungyu prepared to take leave; and the magistrate, finding that he was unprovided with a lodging, directed one of his servants to attend him to the neighbouring monastery, called Changshow Yuen.† They parted, with an engagement to meet again on the following morning.

We leave Teihchungyu for the present, and turn to Kwoketsu, who being presently informed of what had taken place, set off in great tribulation to the residence of his friend the Chefoo, and told him that Shueypingsin being carried to the Chehëen's office, some young man, a friend or relation of that magis-

* Literally, "if uneven, you plane it—if smooth, you let it alone;" a proverb.

† "Hall of long life."

magistrate, had been invited into court, the young lady had been sent home again in a chair, and his own people, after being threatened with punishment, had all been lodged in prison. With the reason of this, he added, he was wholly unacquainted.

“That is strange !” replied the Chefoo ; “ wait a little, and I will send for him.”

This had hardly been said, before the other magistrate was announced, and being immediately invited in, was asked by his superior concerning the young man whom he had treated with such distinction. “ You seem unaware, sir,” replied the Chehëen, “ that he is the famous Teihchungyu, son of the Censor Teihying, who though only twenty years of age, has already attained such universal celebrity. While I was awaiting my present appointment at Peking, I became acquainted with the circumstances attending his rescue of a young female, who had been carried off by the nobleman Takwae, and lodged in a sanctuary bestowed by the emperor ; notwithstanding which, this young man burst his way in, armed with a heavy brazen mace, and brought her out in safety. For this action he was much extolled by his imperial Majesty, who severely punished the guilty noble ; and the fame of this youth spread over the whole province. This morning, by a most extraordinary chance, he fell in with Shueypingsin as they were bringing her to my office, and having there ascertained

certained every circumstance, he took possession of the red paper which was prepared by Kwoketsu, and put it up into his sleeve, declaring that he would carry that forged copy of an imperial decree before the governor of the province. Had he been allowed to do this, the consequences must have been terrible, not only to the father of Kwoketsu, but to yourself, sir, as well as to me. This was the reason of my conduct towards him, and no desire on my part to shew him any superfluous civility."

"So," exclaimed the Chefoo, "this is a very awkward business!"

Kwoketsu, however, observed,* "Let him vapour away like a hero! I do not pretend to be his match in *that*; but the rank and influence of his father at court are much inferior to those enjoyed by mine: and he has no business, besides, to meddle with my affairs. Your worship will still give me a little of your assistance, I hope."

"Alas," said his friend, "it is not that I am unwilling to assist you; but he has got possession of that paper prepared by yourself, and it is impossible to do any thing under such circumstances;—this it is that compels me to be cautious with him."

"Very well, sir," replied the young man, "be as cautious as you chuse, and let the union which I am so anxious to accomplish, vanish and end in nothing."

"To accomplish such unions," said the other,
"rests

* With his usual confidence and audacity.

“rests with heaven—to scheme them only is in the power of man—why speak to me in this style, my good friend?”

“Why, what more is to be done,” exclaimed Kwoketsu, “after you have allowed this opportunity to slip by?”

“You mistake,” said the Chehëen;—“something may still be done. He is by himself in the monastery whither I have sent him to lodge. Return home, and consult safely with a proper counsellor—you may yet discover a way of assisting yourself.”

The young man took leave of his two friends, and went home in search of Chingkee, to whom he related the parting observation of the Chehëen, and required his advice. “When he placed us in custody,” replied his friend, “it was merely to save appearances, and amuse Teihchungyu. Now as he tells you that your enemy is by himself in the monastery, he evidently means that you should take the hint and contrive some scheme of revenge.”

“Very true, very true!” exclaimed Kwoketsu with delight. “But what shall we do with him? Shall we hire people to beat him in broad day, or get somebody to kill him in the dark?”

“Either of these plans might be dangerous,” replied the other. He then drew near, and whispered cautiously in the ear of Kwoketsu what he would advise him to do.

“Good,”

"Good," cried he, with evident satisfaction, "an excellent plan! But it must not be delayed, lest he escape us." He accordingly arranged with his friend the mode of proceeding. But to learn what followed,—to observe the noble return of gratitude for benefits received, and virtue divesting itself of ordinary forms, the reader must proceed to the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

“ CALUMNY IS BRAVED, AND THE PLACE OF LODGING
CHANGED, IN REQUITAL OF SERVICES RENDERED.”

How long do enmities endure !—The rather
Let benefits be strictly recompensed :
The calumny that hung upon her name
Prov'd her of flowers the fairest—her vile foes
Could ne'er depreciate the gem, nor stain,
Though they might foul, its surface—native worth,
Native intelligence guarded her—she walk'd
Firm and alone, without support or aid :
Though laudable the care that shuts out danger,*
The virtue that resists temptation claims
Praise not inferior !

WE leave Kwoketsu and his friend to find an agent for the execution of their plot, and turn to Teihchung-yu, who being escorted to the monastery by a servant of the Chehëen, felt grateful to that magistrate for his civility, and was far from suspecting evil intentions in any quarter. But when he thought of the uncommon beauty of Shueypingsin, and of the admirable intellectual qualities she had displayed, he could

* A reference to the stories of Loonantsze and Lewheahoey. The first, being unavoidably compelled to pass some time alone in a house with a female, is said to have spent the night with a lighted taper and a book, in order to save the lady's reputation, as well as his own. The second is celebrated by Confucius himself, on account of his passionless and imperturbable character and conduct, under circumstances where ordinary persons would have yielded.

could not help saying to himself, "I never imagined that so perfect a female character existed any where! It will be happy indeed if, whenever my family seek a match for me, they find one like this. With such charms as her's, it is not wonderful that Kwoketsu was anxious to possess her, although the means he employed were quite unjustifiable, and I am delighted at having unintentionally been the instrument of rescuing her from harm, and sending her safely home again." He slept soundly that night, but Shueyping-sin was the unceasing subject of his dreams.

As soon as it was daylight, Teihchungyu called his attendant, and desired him to prepare every thing for their departure; but the resident priest* of the monastery made his appearance, and detained him. "Sir," said he, "as the magistrate provides you with a lodging here, he no doubt intends inviting you to an entertainment, and cultivating your friendship. Why be in such haste to depart?"

"I am no friend of his," replied the youth, "and come here in search of no favour or advantage from him. We had something to say together, in

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consequence

* Named *Tuhsew*, which literally means "rectifying the heart in solitude." The priests of Buddha are generally stolen or bought from their parents in infancy, and such names as the above are conferred on them. A monastery, similar to the one in the text, exists at Canton, and served as a lodging for the embassy of 1816. It contains, among other objects of curiosity to Europeans, an enormous sty of privileged pigs, whose lives are spared as an act of merit in this sect.

'Et vetus indulget senibus clementia porcis.'

consequence of a little act of injustice which fell in my way ; but, that being done, there is no occasion for farther intercourse, on the ground of either business or civility. What is there to prevent my departure ?”

“ Nothing,” replied the priest, “ except that I have reported to his worship you would not go away so early.” Scarcely was this uttered before a messenger arrived from the magistrate, with a card of invitation for that evening, and the priest then added, “ Was I not right in detaining you ?”

When Teihchungyu found that the magistrate was so pressing, he thought himself obliged to defer his journey ; and the priest soon prepared his breakfast, which he had just finished, when there arrived a person dressed like an upper servant in a family, who said that he had been sent by his lady Shueypingsin to find out the young gentleman’s lodging, in order to convey to him some presents in acknowledgment of his kind succour.

Teihchungyu immediately came out to speak to the man, whom he desired to return to his lady, and tell her, with his best respects, that the occurrences of yesterday had happened entirely without premeditation, and he had merely used his endeavours to rectify an act of violence which chance threw in his way ; he had accordingly given a loose to his resentment, and provoked the magistrate, “ who,” added he, “ if he finds that your lady sends me presents, will take occasion

occasion to ascribe it to wrong motives—she must not think of it.”

The servant replied that his lady, who had yesterday been thrown off her guard, and well nigh fallen into the tiger’s jaws, felt so much indebted to her kind deliverer, that she would be very uneasy unless allowed to offer some small token of her gratitude.

“Your lady,” replied the youth, “is one of the patterns of her sex; I myself am of a temper easily excited against what is base, and in our common regard for virtue we have a better ground of mutual esteem than the mere observance of ordinary forms. It would, therefore, be highly unbefitting in me to take a present—on no account will I receive any. To-day I dine with the magistrate, but to-morrow morning shall proceed on my journey. Let me yet warn your lady against the wily violence of the tiger: let me conjure her to be still on her guard against the dangers which menace her.”

The servant on his return home gave a faithful report of this message to his lady, who was charmed by what she heard. “Is there really,” thought she to herself, “so perfect a character between heaven and earth—one so truly worthy of respect! I consider it a hard fate that custom debars me, as a female, from an interchange of friendship with him! How unfortunate, too, that in my father’s absence there should be nobody here to receive so worthy a guest—

that the opportunity of contracting so excellent an acquaintance should melt away like ice or snow!" She then considered whether her uncle might not be available on the occasion: but abandoned the idea, as she greatly feared his treachery. She again felt desirous of sending the youth a present, but observing his elevation of character, thought he might conceive a mean idea of her for paying such minute attention to trifles;—besides, her enemies would misconstrue her motives. Thus it was that she turned the matter repeatedly over in her mind, without being able to decide on any thing.

From time to time, however, the young lady sent a person to inquire how Teihchungyu was getting on at the monastery, thinking that it might still be in her power to serve him. A report arrived in the afternoon that he was gone to dine with the magistrate; and in the evening she was informed that he had returned to his lodging, after being induced to drink freely. A messenger was despatched on the following morning to ascertain if he had set out on his journey; but he returned, after some inquiries, and said that Teihchungyu, in consequence of the conviviality overnight, had not yet risen. The suspicions of Shuey-pingsin were now excited—she could not rest satisfied,—and again despatched her messenger, who brought the same report as before. She inquired the reason of his not taking his departure as intended?

To

To which the servant replied, that he had asked the question, and the priest stated as a reason the wish of the superior magistrate to detain him, as he also was aware of his father's high situation, and intended to invite him to an entertainment likewise.

Shueypingsin felt in some measure satisfied by this, as it appeared suitable enough with the rank and situation of the parties. After the lapse of two whole days, however, her spy came in a great hurry to inform her, that the preceding evening the priest had invited his guest to an entertainment of herbs and fruit;* that the latter had this morning been seized with violent pains and sickness, and remained so indisposed as to refuse every thing—even tea. The young lady's fears were excited. “How should such a simple repast make him ill?—there must be something more in this!” thought she, and immediately sent a person to ascertain secretly if a physician had been called in.

She received for answer, that the Chehëen's doctor had seen him, but reported that it was nothing more than a little internal disorder from irregular diet, which medicine would soon cure. She felt somewhat quieted, but nevertheless sent off early the next morning to ascertain farther, and then learned that he had taken the doctor's prescription overnight, and been
very

* This sect being debarred, by their tenets, from destroying animal life, or partaking of flesh and wine.

been very ill ever since,—that he was reduced, in fact, to the lowest degree of weakness.*

Shueypingsin's alarm became excessive. "There is some villainy," thought she;—"he has fallen a victim to some foul plot!"—But what could *she* do to save him, young girl as she was—how was it possible for her to go thither? She ransacked her invention in vain for some feasible plan, and walked up and down her room in the greatest agitation, sighing and weeping, as she exclaimed, "Alas! it was all on my account that he incurred this fatal adventure, and if I do not contrive to save him, who will?" After a moment's embarrassment she suddenly thought to herself, "The occasion is urgent, I must brave calumny for once, and act as the extremity of the case requires." She then inquired of her servants what attendants had Teihchungyu, and being told that he had but one, a boy named Seaoutan, about fourteen or fifteen years of age, she asked if he seemed intelligent? Being told he was particularly so, "Then," said the young lady, "let him be privately informed that I desire to see him, having something of consequence to communicate. Let two of you proceed immediately, one to bring him hither, and the other to remain by his master during his absence."

Seaoutan presently obeyed this summons, and the young lady inquired of him, "What could occasion
your

* The original contains a circumstantiality in the description of his disorder which our translation may dispense with.

your master to fall so suddenly ill, after appearing in such good health only a few days since?"

"My master," replied the lad, "commonly enjoys the best health; but after drinking more wine than usual at the magistrate's, he began to droop, and since the priest's entertainment he has gradually become worse; while the medicine which the doctor gave him yesterday, instead of curing him, has made him still weaker than ever."

"But though so weak in body," said Shueypingsin, "has he yet entire possession of his mind?"—Being assured that he was still quite sensible, though scarcely able to speak through debility,—“then,” continued she, “it is not too late to save him. Do you go back, and inform your master privately from me that the Chehëen had no good intention in detaining him. The circumstances attending my rescue, the discomfiture of Kwo-ketsu's schemes, and the affront put upon himself, have made an implacable enemy of that magistrate. The seizure of the pretended paper from the emperor, however, obliged him to be cautious, and as he perceived that your master was without friends in this place, he has put on the semblance of great civility and attention, with the ultimate view of poisoning him in his food. Unless he observes the greatest precaution from this moment, and refuses every thing they offer him, I will not answer for his life.”

The page here exclaimed, “Your ladyship must surely

surely be right! for if not for some villainous plot, how should he suffer so much from the medicine which he took last night? I suspect the priest himself is one of the wretches concerned. They would persuade my master to take more of their medicine;—but I will go back and inform him of every thing, that he may treat them as they deserve.”

“Hold!” replied Shueypingsin, “that must not be! The priest is most likely concerned: but he still acts by the suggestion of the Chehëen. If your master says any thing just now, the other will hear of it; and as his situation is desperate,* he will hit upon a plan still more fatal. Your master, in his present condition, is no match for his enemies; let him, therefore, feign that his illness has made him delirious, in order to throw the priest off his guard; and if you will remain quiet until night, a sedan shall be in readiness near the monastery, to which you may convey him, and bring him straight to my house. The library shall be prepared;—there he may nurse himself in safety for some days, and re-establish his health and strength. When that is effected, it will not be too late to take vengeance on his enemies.”

Seaoutan assured her that he would pay exact obedience to her directions, and was going to take his leave, when she called him back and said, “I have one word more of consequence to add, which you must attend to, and

* Literally, ‘he is like a man on a tiger’s back.’

and recollect. Your master I know to be a person of very rigid sentiments; I am afraid, therefore, that he may object to coming hither, and be willing to run any risk rather than expose either of us to calumnious imputations. Should such be the case, you may remind him from me, that the great and virtuous have always obeyed the dictates of their own superior minds, without affecting a rigid and pedantic exterior. When the sage Confucius himself went over in disguise to the state Soong, he adapted his conduct to the necessity of his circumstances. I shall expect your master at this house, and trust that he will take my invitation in earnest, instead of regarding it as a mere matter of form."

The page promised to attend to all she said, and hastened to return to his master's bed-side, where, finding him asleep, he waited until he awoke with a deep sigh, and then, looking round to see that nobody was within hearing, reported all that Shueypingsin had directed him to say regarding the evil intentions of the magistrate. Teihchungyu listened with astonishment. "Yes," exclaimed he to himself, "a pretty dupe I have been on this occasion!" Then, with a sudden impulse of rage and resentment, he would have gone straight to the Chehëen's;—but the page mentioned the argument of the young lady in favour of his remaining quiet, and ended by telling him of her plan for restoring him to health.

Teihchungyu

Teihchungyu was charmed by what he heard, and expressed his admiration of her kindness. "But," said he, "she is a young woman without protection, and I myself a very young man: besides which, there are the events of the other day to promote suspicion and slander; better die, then, in the hands of these villains, than do her such a disservice as go to her house." His page now thought it time to recount her parting speech, which he did with great exactness, and at once delighted and persuaded his master, who exclaimed, "To judge by her words, one might take her for some great sage or hero, instead of a tender young girl!—I can have no more scruples on the subject."

He had hardly done speaking when the priest brought in another dose of medicine, and gave it to the page. "The doctor," said he, "advises that this too be taken—it will certainly cure the disorder." The boy received it with thanks, and told him that his master should swallow it as soon as he could be lifted up in bed, upon which the priest went away, recommending some rice gruel to be taken soon after: but no sooner was his back turned than Seaoutan threw the potion into the drain behind the monastery, while Teihchungyu muttered with indignation, "Oh, that I should be reduced to this condition by the machinations of that shaven-pated slave!"

When it was evening, Seaoutan perceived a small well-appointed sedan waiting at some distance beyond
the

the gate of the monastery, attended by two servants, with whom having made his arrangements, he proceeded quietly to inform his master. The latter, however, was in so weak a state that he could hardly rise from his bed, and began to fear that he should be unable to avail himself of Shueypingsin's kindness. But he made a violent effort, and by great good luck there happened to be no person in the way. His boy exerted all his strength to assist him, and when they had got out of the monastery, the two servants contributed their assistance to convey the youth into the chair, which done, he was immediately carried off by the bearers. The boy ran back to the monastery, and told the priest, who acted as porter, that his master had met with a friend who undertook to nurse his complaint, and that his travelling effects might be placed under the care of the head priest until they were called for;—after which he followed the chair.

When they had proceeded half-way they were met by two more servants of Shueypingsin, each of them carrying a painted lantern. Teihchungyu, as he sat in the sedan, observing the care that had been taken in the preparation of its blinds and cushions, and saw the lanterns in attendance, could not help feeling very grateful for the care which Shueypingsin seemed to take of him.

They presently arrived at the house, where, according to the directions that the young lady had previously given, the

the chair was carried straight into the great hall and set down. The lamps were all burning with a snowy lustre, and Shueypingsin stood in a side room on the right of the hall, whence she ordered two wives of servants in the family, and two waiting maids, to go and assist Teihchungyu out of the sedan, and lead him into the library on the east side, which was the chamber provided for him. The young man, as he got out of the chair, called his page and bade him offer his grateful acknowledgments to Shueypingsin for her goodness, which nothing but his sickness prevented him from duly acknowledging; but that with the first return of health he would bow down to the earth in token of his gratitude. Then leaning on the attendants, he was led into his chamber, and sat down on the bed, where, exhausted with the exertions he had made, he laid himself down at once with his clothes on, and being freed from all anxiety, as well as soothed by the kindness of his reception, turned round and fell sound asleep.

Shueypingsin had desired her maids to present decoctions of the fruits *heangyě* and *loongyen*,* as well as the root *jinseng*; but when they found that he was asleep,

* The fruit called *loongyen*, or 'dragon's eye,' and the plant *jinseng* are well known; but the *heangyě* has not been met with. The following is an abstract of its description in the Puntsaou, or Chinese herbal. "It is called by the Budhists the ganlo fruit, grows on a large tree, and belongs to the pear tribe; when ripe of a yellow colour,—leaves resembling the tea plant—seeds those of the pear: a wholesome fruit, and a decoction of it used to allay thirst."

asleep, they forebore from waking him. Their mistress dismissed her attendants with the exception of a few females, whom she retained in the outer hall to prepare the tea, &c., while the boy was directed to wait by his master's bed in case he should call.

It was only about the third * watch when the latter awoke, and looking round, perceived a couple of lighted candles on the table, and Seaoutan sitting at the bottom of the bed. Seeing his master was awake, the boy asked him if he felt better? "My sleep has done me good," replied Teihchungyu;—"but why are you not asleep?" Seaoutan told him that he was not the only person awake, for the young lady herself was sitting in the hall, with a number of her attendants, preparing tea and other drinks. His master was startled by this. "I must not think of letting her take so much trouble on my account!" said he,—when at the same moment several of the attendants came to the door, bringing with them the various preparations.

Teihchungyu would take no tea, and rejected the jinseng as too strong; but he tasted the decoction of loongyen, and was prevailed on to take half a bowl of it. He then addressed himself to those in waiting: "Pray present my respects to your lady, and tell her how grateful I feel for her noble exertions in rescuing me from the tiger's jaws; but if she puts herself to so much trouble for my accommodation, it will deprive me

of

* From eleven until one in the morning—midnight.

of rest and sleep—let me entreat her then to consult her own ease a little.”

Here one of the waiting maids, who was more particularly attached to her mistress's person, interrupted him. “My lady, sir, considers your present sickness as entirely owing to the services you performed for her, and therefore, as long as you are ill, it is impossible for her to feel at ease. While she heard you were daily growing worse, her anxiety was insupportable, but now that you are lodged in a place of safety her chief fears are allayed ; and as for these little services which she is able to render, they are not worth consideration. She only begs that you will compose yourself, and thereby consult your own speedy recovery, without troubling your thoughts with any thing farther.”

“But,” rejoined he, “if your lady is disquieted by my sickness, I am equally disquieted by the fatigue and exertion she undergoes for my sake : let me beg her then to consult our mutual good by giving herself some rest.”

“She will no doubt obey your wishes,” said the other, “and retire to rest when she finds you are comfortably settled ;” upon which Teihchungyu said he would retire at once, and desired his boy to assist him off with his clothes, and shut the curtains. As he turned round to sleep, he could not help remarking, with some emotion, the care that seemed to have been taken in the preparation of his bed and of its furniture.

Thus

Thus good for good, kindness for kindness done,
Prov'd gratitude unfeign'd, and from the heart :
A single thought, unworthy of th' occasion,
Had earn'd the censure of a thousand years.

When her attendants reported to Shueypingsin what the youth had said, she observed, that if he could speak thus sensibly, there was no fear of his being in any danger : but at the same time gave orders that a skilful physician should be called in the morning ; and having directed two of her females to sleep in the hall, in case of any thing being required at night, she retired to her own chamber to rest.

'Tis said the thankful ghost* did knit the grass,
While deep in earth the white bones lay ;—the bird
Brought in its grateful bill the healing flower :—
Fair gratitude has ever deck'd alike
Fam'd characters of old.

Unable, however, to relieve her mind from its chief anxiety, Shueypingsin rose with the dawn to renew her instructions to her domestics, charging the page at the same time to conceal from his master that she was busying herself on his account. When Teihchungyu shortly afterwards awoke, he desired to get up ; but finding himself still weak, he arrayed himself in bed, and having taken some gruel, remained quiet in a reclining posture. The physician presently arrived, and when he had seen him, and examined into his case, delivered the following opinion : “ Your pulse,” said the doctor, “ is regular, and therefore nothing serious
can

* See Notes to Appendix.

can be the matter internally. Some impropriety of diet has injured the stomach : there is no need of a great deal of physic : a few days' quiet nursing will restore you. In the first place, beware of any strong emotion : secondly, beware of fatigue and anxiety : thirdly, beware of talking too much. These things are of chief consequence." Then taking out two papers of medicine, the doctor departed.

Shueypingsin heard of this favourable report with great satisfaction. But we leave her for the present, and turn to the priest at the monastery, who when he learned from the porter that Teihchungyu was gone, and had bequeathed his baggage to his care, was thrown into the utmost consternation. " I should not mind it," thought he, " had not Kwoketsu so repeatedly charged me to detain him, and make away with him quietly by poisoning his drink.* In the course of four days, I had nearly effected this, and gave him a dose at last by which I would have engaged to kill him ; but in spite of all this, sick as he was, he has contrived to escape ! I cannot understand it. If Kwoketsu comes here, what can I possibly say ?"

He pondered anxiously for a whole night, but made nothing of the matter, and as soon as morning appeared, went over to the house of Kwoketsu to inform him. The latter flew into a violent rage. " What !" exclaimed

* Literally, ' by putting rhubarb, *patow*, and the like in his gruel.' *Patow* is the *croton tiglium*, a tremendously powerful drug.

claimed he, "did you not tell me, two days since, that the fellow lay half dead on his couch? How escaped he yesterday?—But, no, you have been shifting sides: you have let him off, because his father is a member of the Censorate—You have paid this slight to my family."

The priest began to rave and beat his breast in despair. "Alas! sir," cried he, "why kill me with your injurious suspicions! I belong to a class altogether dependent on those in power. How should I set aside yourself, our native patron and benefactor, to serve the other, who is a perfect stranger?"

"This is the Chehëen's affair," replied Kwoketsu, "and I shall just take you before him to explain yourself." So saying, without allowing the priest to communicate with any one, he carried him to the magistrate, and told the latter of Teihchungyu's escape.

"How is this?" said he to the priest; "how came you to let the youth go away?"

"Sir," replied the other, "if I had wished to contrive his escape, what prevented my choosing the time when he was well, and went out to dinner every day? I might then have pleaded an excuse; but after he was nine parts dead, what should induce me to send him away, merely to excite this suspicion and anger against myself? Believe me I am quite ignorant of his mode of escape."

"Well," said the magistrate, "I am inclined to believe this, and will take no farther notice; but have

you no means of tracing whither he went?" The priest replied, that he was equally ignorant on this point; and the Chehëen then inquired if any friend had visited him?—to which the other likewise answered in the negative. "But," said the magistrate, "somebody must surely have communicated with him?"

"A servant only of Shueykeuyih's household," replied the priest, "came to make inquiries, and even *he* never entered the young man's chamber."

Here the magistrate laughed, and turned to Kwoketsu. "It is just as I guessed!" exclaimed he.

"What is your worship's meaning?" inquired the young man.

"Why," said the other, "Teihchungyu's friend on this occasion is no other than Shueypingsin, whom he lately rescued. She is a wonderful young woman! Perceiving his long detention and subsequent illness, she saw at once into the whole plot, sent persons to look out, and at length carried him off. If you wish to know more about it, go to your wife's father, he will be able to inform you."

Kwoketsu paused, and presently exclaimed, "Your surmise must be true; but what a hateful creature is that Shueypingsin!—After all my solicitations she persisted in refusing me, and now she at once lodges this smooth-faced youth in her own house."

"Do not be hasty," said the magistrate, "but inquire first into the truth: we will then consult farther."

The

The priest was now dismissed, and Kwoketsu returned to his own house, whence he sent a message to Shueyun, inviting him to come over. When the latter arrived, his son-in-law told him that he understood his niece had concealed a young man named Teihchungyu in her house, and asked if he was aware of it?

"No," replied the other, "she is so vexed with me for not going to her rescue on the late occasion, that she never speaks to me; I have giving up going to see her, and therefore know nothing of this business."

"May I trouble you then, to go and make inquiries," said his son-in-law.

"I can easily do that," said Shueyun, "but pray is this youth the person who rescued her at the magistrate's?"—And being told that he was, "I heard," continued he, "that his worship sent him to lodge at the monastery—how comes my niece, then, to harbour him?" The other gave the grounds of his suspicion, upon which Shueyun exclaimed, "This business will not end here! But wait while I go and make inquiries." So saying, he walked straight home, and calling for his youngest son, told him to go over to his cousin's, under pretence of amusement, and observe narrowly what was passing there.

Shueypingsin made no secret of the business, and the boy soon found out the whole truth. He went back in a great hurry to his father, and told him that there was a young man laid up sick in the library on the east

side. This point being ascertained, Shueyun went over to his niece and addressed her thus: "Your father and I have long lived separate, and it is therefore unwillingly that I interfere in your domestic matters. But the scandalous reports I have lately heard abroad, compel me, as your nearest relation, to take some cognizance of them."

"No doubt," replied his niece, "if you have learned any thing to my disadvantage, you have a full right, as my uncle, to inquire into it; but pray what may you be alluding to?"

"I have heard," said he, "that the two sexes ought to remain properly separate—how is it, then, that you a solitary female, without either father or brothers in the house, receive into your own dwelling and there nurse a perfect stranger, one whom you scarcely know even by name? No wonder that people talk about it, for I, your near relation, cannot pretend to defend you."

To this his niece replied,* "I have always understood, uncle, that the forms and limitations prescribed by the wise and virtuous of old were for the guidance of ordinary characters, who stood in need of them, not for such as were able to act rightly by the native dictates of their own minds. When the sovereign Heuenkoong conferred with his own hands a badge on his meritorious servant, he stepped out of the

* This defence of the young lady is a curious specimen of Chinese moral sentiment.

the ordinary rules of form ;* and the philosopher Mencius, in speaking of the reserve to be maintained between the sexes, conscious that the blind observance of small forms might prejudice more important duties, states that even this reserve must be waved in matters of life and death, and that he who for a point of form allowed another to perish, would be little better than a savage beast. From such instances one may infer with certainty that all the prescriptions of the sages of antiquity had no object in view but the rectitude of men's hearts, and that where *these* are as they ought to be, a few trifling forms may be violated without harm ; in confirmation of which there is this maxim, 'important duties must not be omitted ; but minor points may yield to circumstances.' I remember what has been observed by a great historian, that 'particular exigencies are common to all ;' moreover,† 'that benefits and wrongs should both be returned ;' and accordingly, the celebrated persons of every age have undergone every extremity in order to recompense their benefactors and punish their enemies. I am a weak and secluded female, yet I respect their example. While quietly residing in the privacy of my house, without a thought contrary to the laws or to decorum, a gang of villains conspired to counterfeit the

* The custom being to transmit the same.

† There seems some waggery in overwhelming the ignorant Shueyun with such a string of authorities.

the imperial decree, and get possession of my person. *Then* where was the protection of the laws? where the restraint of public opinion?—and, I may add, where the succour of nearest relations? To whom could I talk of the reserve to be maintained between the sexes?—But in that crisis, when I was more dead than alive, and when the malice of my enemies had reached its height, could I do otherwise than feel grateful to the person who rescued me? Teihchung-yu is a young man neither known nor related to my family; yet when I consider the services his courage and generosity have rendered me, which of my neighbours or relations can I find to compare to him? Without any previous acquaintance, and meeting by mere chance with a case of oppression in his path, he defended my cause in the magistrate's public court, and saved me from perishing in the hands of my wicked ravishers. My safe return was solely owing to this youth's prowess—and now, when his services have provoked against himself the vengeance of my enemies, and fallen as he is into their snares, did I, from any fear of vulgar calumny, allow my excellent benefactor to perish unfriended in a strange place, in what respect should I differ from a savage beast? For these reasons I received him into my house, but as soon as his health permits he will leave it. I shall then have paid back some part of the debt I owe him, and I should feel no shame if it were proclaimed to the heavens and the

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the earth, to the gods and demons. Who are the persons that dare comment on my behaviour? Would you undertake my defence, and act as befits my near relative, go and apprehend the villains who counterfeited the decree and seized my person; let them all be punished, both principals and accessaries.* You will then vindicate our family name from reproach; instead of keeping your hands in your sleeves, and coming over to insult me with a parcel of trite maxims, which I am surprised you should think me capable of listening to."

Shueyun was struck dumb by this lecture! He stood like a fool for some moments, but at length recovered himself sufficiently to make the following reply. "It was not that I felt unwilling to take your part, but my power and influence were unequal to the attempt. Your discourse is very ingenious and reasonable; but you must remember that the virtuous and talented bear no proportion to the mean and envious, nor the learned and enlightened to the ignorant and dull. Ordinary persons merely remark, 'Here is a young woman who entertains a young man in her house,' and their construction of your conduct is extremely unfavourable."

"The

* The Chinese law distinguishes, in most cases, between principals and accessaries *before the fact*, punishing the latter by one degree less severely than the former: while our law punishes accessaries *before* the fact as principals;—*after* the fact, as mere concealers of what they were bound to reveal.

“The world’s unfavourable views of conduct and character,” replied his niece, “are but the floating clouds, from which the brightest day is not free. The heart is the root of our actions; this should be continually guarded, and I am satisfied if I can keep mine pure and free from taint. With regard to other people’s—if they should stand in need of watching, you have only to exercise a little private vigilance, and may perhaps make some discoveries.”

After this rebuff, Shueyun was glad to slink off to his house in silence;—but to learn how our excellent pair vindicated themselves from suspicion and slander, and to see what farther schemes were agitated against them, the reader must proceed to the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

" FIVE DAYS ARE BLAMELESSLY PASSED, AND THE HERO
IS DETAINED TO AN ENTERTAINMENT."

O marvel not that she, a gifted maid,
With slender waist and hands so delicate,
Could foil and vex her wond'ring enemies !
Warm was her heart, though pure—her matchless soul
Chaste as translucent ice ! Th' advice she gave
Fell on her willing hearer's listening ear
In welcome words ! Firm in her righteous purpose,
She needed not support—Conscious of truth
Herself, she scorn'd distrust—Alas ! had each
Strict rule of form been rigidly obey'd,
Where had our hero found a safe retreat !

As Shueyun returned home in silence and disgrace,
overcome by the eloquence of his niece, whom he had
so confidently expected to convict of error, he could not
help saying to himself, " This young girl is too ready
with her reasons ! I have no chance in argument with
her, and had better let her alone for the future, whatever
mistakes she may seem to commit."

A message just then arrived from Kwoketsu, begging
to see him, so he went over directly and informed his
son-in-law that it was really Teihchungyu whom she
had conveyed to her house. The other was exceedingly
annoyed. " What does she mean," cried he, " by
entertaining

entertaining a young man there?—you are her uncle, sir, and it is your business to teach her better.”

“ Alas !” replied he, “ have I not done my best ?—but she has a mouth as keen as a sword, always at her command ! I had hardly said a word before she overwhelmed me with innumerable arguments drawn from the past and the present ; I could not open my mouth !” He then detailed what his niece had said ; but Kwoketsu still stamped and raved, while he persisted in declaring that it was nothing but an affectation of virtue and delicacy—who was to believe her ? “ As to that,” said Shueyun, I do not believe her myself, but unless we can catch her tripping there is nothing to be done.”

“ Why,” said the other, “ Chingkee told me yesterday, that this youth is very good-looking, and his exploit at the magistrate’s evidently nothing more than a way of ensuring the admiration and good-will of such a beauty in his own favour. Far from believing that her conduct proceeds from any of the fine reasons she gives, I suspect the whole is a scheme concerted between themselves. At this time of day, if two young persons live together in the same house, with motives for feeling mutually obliged, let them be the very saints or worthies that we read of, it is impossible they should preserve their virtue.”

“ There is little use in our empty conjectures,” said Shueyun ; “ you had better let me send a young servant girl to secrete herself in the house, and observe their
their

their words and actions: if we can only catch them tripping, there will be an end of all their fine pretexts."

His son-in-law approved of this plan; and Shueyun, on his return home, having waited till it was dusk, desired a little waiting-maid to creep over unobserved through the small door of communication, and concealing herself in a place where some billet-wood was piled up, to observe from time to time what was done within. She obeyed her instructions, and watched during the early part of the night; then waiting until Shueypingsin had retired to rest, she stole back again to her master, and reported that Teihchungyu was better, but still in bed, and that whatever he eat or drank was carried to him there. Being asked where the young lady herself remained, and if she either saw or conversed with the youth, the girl replied, that she superintended her women in the outer apartment, without ever seeing her guest, and that the chief communication between them was through the boy, who had been desired by his master to request Shueypingsin would oblige him by taking some rest, and not troubling herself so much on his account.

When the girl had answered all his other questions to the same effect, Shueyun stood lost in silent astonishment. "Can this young woman," thought he, "really be as clear and spotless as ice or crystal?—Can she persist in being so unmoved and passionless?—I cannot believe it." So he made the girl watch in the

the same manner for three or four nights successively ; but without getting a word from her to criminate the parties,—and was at last reduced to his wit's end !

However, he went over to his son-in-law, and told him of his failure, adding, that Shueypingsin treated the young man with all the distant respect and reserve due from a mere host to a guest, and that there really seemed to be such perfect freedom from reproach in her conduct, that he must do her the justice to suppose she spoke truth.

The other shook his head in token of incredulity. “ Ah ! sir,” said he, “ your words might amuse some fool, and persuade him that there have been, and are still, such people as Lewheahoey* in the world ! But let me go and prevail on the Chehëen to issue a warrant for the apprehension of one of the female attendants. I will answer for it that a good pinch of the fingers† will get the evidence we want from her. It may possibly turn out, that all your niece's fine talking will be put to silence ; and you yourself, sir, obliged to say something in your own defence !”

“ Alas !” cried Shueyun, “ why murder me with such injurious suspicions ? After relating all that she said to me, why involve me in the suspicion which can alone be due to my niece ?”

“ Well,” said the other, “ if you really do not wish to

* Celebrated by Confucius for his cold and immoveable temper.

† See note, p. 122.

to deceive me, suppose you go and try again to make something of this business."

Shueyun was obliged to return home, while his son-in-law went straight to the magistrate, and informed him of all that had occurred, concluding with a request that he would issue his warrant* for the seizure of one of the young lady's waiting-maids.

"As a magistrate," replied the Chehëen, "I have prescribed forms to follow; and whatever be the nature of the case, some accusation must be lodged before I can issue my warrant. Besides, this is a matter relating to the interior of a household—still less then can I interfere without previous information."

"But if your worship allows such a guilty connection to exist openly under your jurisdiction, what is it but inflicting a severe wound on the public morals?"

"Were the guilt proved," said the magistrate, "it would be as you say; but if there be no guilt in the case, it only redounds the more to the credit of the public morals. This young lady has, on several occasions, conducted herself with great prudence, and the young man is already celebrated for his courage and virtue; how then are we to judge them by the usual standard?"

"You know, sir," replied the other, "what pains and anxiety the pursuit of this girl has cost me: and to see her take up a mere casual acquaintance, and treat him with

* This warrant is a slip of wood, with three or four words inscribed.

with all the honours of a distinguished guest, is enough to excite my bitterest resentment."

"Do not be precipitate," said the magistrate; "attached to my office is a lad named Tanyew, of such extraordinary cunning and activity, that he can climb over any roofs or walls, and penetrate through any obstacles whatever. I have been obliged to sentence him to punishment; but as you need his services to arrive at the truth of this mystery, I will forgive him on condition that he exerts all his skill to discover the nature of their intercourse. We shall then be able to adopt further measures."

"There can be no doubt of their detection and shame," replied the young man, "and I am much obliged by your worship's offer."

The lad in question was summoned, and being desired by the magistrate to draw near until he knelt close to his chair, was accosted thus: "Your offences deserve dismissal at least, but if you can make yourself useful in the service to which you are destined, nothing more shall be said." The fellow touched the ground with his forehead in token of gratitude, declaring that he would do his best; and the magistrate, having ascertained that he was well acquainted with the dwelling of Shueypingsin, proceeded: "There is a young gentleman at present in the house, *said* to be sick, and as I am doubtful whether this be true, or a mere pretext for something irregular, do you go and
conceal

conceal yourself there, in order to ascertain it. If you behave well, I will certainly grant you a pardon ; but if you either fail to discover the truth, or practise any deception which shall cause trouble, do not expect to live !”

With repeated prostrations and assurances of zeal, Tanyew was released by the magistrate's order, and proceeded to execute his new service.

Heaven's light illumines not th' inverted bowl—

There is no evidence like that of sight :

Say not 'twas wrong t'engage a spy,—for else

Virtue from vice had ne'er distinguish'd been !

We leave Kwoketsu to wait for news from the Chehëen at home, whither he returned after seeing the emissary despatched, and thanking the magistrate. Their agent obeyed his instructions with great diligence, and lost no time in reconnoitring the mansion of Shueypingsin. He waited until every thing seemed quiet, and then, gathering himself into the smallest compass possible, crept through an opening and stole towards the outside of the kitchen, where he heard them talking of an entertainment which they were preparing for Teihchungyu on his recovery. He then crept softly towards the great hall, and perceived the young lady herself giving directions within. His next exploit was to creep cautiously through the dusk to the back of the hall, where he contrived to climb, by the assistance of the great screen at the door-way, towards the interior of
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the roof,* and by dint of cunning and activity to reach the main beam of the hall, on the top of which he lay rolled up, and could observe every thing which passed beneath.

He remarked that Shueypingsin directed her attendants to place across the middle of the hall a semi-transparent screen, which divided it into two equal parts to the east and west. On the east side was placed a table, with two lofty candles lighted, for Teihchungyu: on the other, a second table for the young lady herself, but without lights. This side, being in comparative obscurity, enabled her to observe what passed on the other: while persons without the screen could discern nothing within. On both sides were laid red carpets for the observance of the customary forms at the meeting of distinguished persons. On the east, or outer side, two men servants of the family were ordered to wait upon the guest; while two females stood as channels of communication between the temporary apartments.

When the servants had laid the repast in order on either side of the screen, Seaoutan was desired to invite his master to come forth from his room. Though Teihchungyu was naturally of a robust figure, he had been exceedingly reduced by the poisonous draughts administered to him by his enemies. Five or six days, however,

* Chinese rooms have no ceilings, and therefore the beams and rafters, which are round, and very massive, become the subjects of ornamental carving, painting, and gilding.

however, of rest and remedies, with the care which the young lady herself took in preparing every thing he had drank, restored him gradually to health, and he had already regained much of his former good looks. The joy of Shueypingsin, at being instrumental to his recovery from a danger incurred in her service, had induced her to give him this entertainment : and when he issued from his chamber at her invitation, and perceived the screen and other arrangements, a feeling of respect towards his hostess was added to his previous gratitude.

He took his stand on the red carpet, and told the attendants to inform their lady that he begged to be allowed to testify his respect ; but before they had time to speak, Shueypingsin replied in a clear voice from behind the screen, “ Sir, your poor handmaid has to thank you for the extraordinary goodness and resolution with which you rescued her from the tiger’s jaws, and imposed on her a debt of gratitude which scarcely yields to the greatest. In receiving you here, I perhaps should not have adopted these outward and empty safeguards against calumny ; but considering that my father is absent in exile, that we are both single, and that under these peculiar circumstances you condescend to lodge in my house, I have paid some regard in my conduct to the opinion of the world, as the sage* did when he

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lighted

* Kwonyunchang, another name for the person mentioned at page 128, note.

lighted his taper. I trust that you will neither laugh at me, nor be offended with what I have done."

"Lady," replied he, "by your admirable prudence in the dangers which assailed you, and especially by your kindness towards myself, you have surpassed the most excellent of your sex in past or present times. Fallen as I was into their wicked snares, and waiting only for death to complete my misfortune, had it not been for your clear foresight, you would not have known the occasion to save me—if not for your address in changing my lodgings, you could not have found a way to save me,—and if not for your noble confidence in yourself, you would not have dared to save me; but uniting in your own person all the prudence and courage most famed in history, you rescued me from my peril without even causing an alarm—from a peril which might have made the boldest pause. Thus you saved my life from the brink of destruction, and the immense obligation I can never repay. Let me request you to take your seat, and accept my humble respects."

To this she replied: "Your misfortune, sir, was the consequence of your noble exertions in my rescue; your present happy recovery may mitigate my self-condemnation for having been the cause; but how shall I pretend to any merit on the occasion?—It is for me to betoken my respect to yourself."

Both of them now proceeded to make four profound obeisances on either side of the screen, after which
Shueypingsin

Shueypingsin directed a female attendant to present a brimming cup of wine* in her name, and request Teihchungyu to take his seat. He on his side returned the compliment by filling another cup, and directing the attendant to present it to her lady. They then sat down, and before three cups had been drank, Shueypingsin addressed her guest, begging to know the occasion of his visit to that part of the country.

“No particular object drew me hither,” replied he; “my resentment at the unjust imprisonment of my father in Peking led me to assail the nobleman Takwae in his retreat, and to bring out from thence the lady whom he had oppressively seized and concealed there. He was sentenced by the Emperor to three years’ solitary imprisonment; and my father, apprehensive of the effects of private revenge against myself, directed me to set forth on a tour of instruction. I little expected that my first arrival here would excite the deadly enmity of this worthless magistrate, and cause him to plot against my life. To your succour, lady, I owe my escape from his machinations,—and now he shall feel what I can do in my turn! To-morrow I shall take the liberty of walking into his hall, and asking him publicly how he, who receives the imperial bounty to be the parent of those under his authority, instead of redressing their

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wrongs,

* The Chinese cups are extremely small, being inferior in capacity to our wine glasses: their wine too is very weak. These two circumstances may account for the frequent repetition of pledges in every entertainment, among a people who are habitually temperate.

wrongs, aims with the fury of a vulture or a dog at their ruin, for the sake of assisting the degenerate son of a man in power. When I have thus openly shamed, and exposed him to the contempt and ridicule of the whole district, I will wait on the governor of the province, and call on him to arrest this magistrate for his delinquency: I shall then have received some satisfaction for my resentment. The governor is an old official comrade of my father, and will no doubt listen to my complaint."

"The dismissal to which you would subject him," replied the young lady, "is certainly what his conduct strictly deserves; at the same time he could scarcely fail to feel resentment at the public manner in which you disgraced him in his own hall. The habit of turning official power to their own profit is too common among the less worthy magistrates. He knew that my father was banished, while the minister Kwoloongtung was promoted to the Emperor's council, and therefore naturally favoured the son of the latter. Consider the toil with which he fitted himself for office, and the difficulty with which he obtained his degrees; and you will no doubt feel pleased with yourself for your forbearance hereafter, when the anger of the moment has subsided. In your very first rencontre you degraded him by an act of impetuosity; and as there certainly was something suspicious in the aspect of the succour you afforded me, his vulgar mind was unable to conceive that it could
proceed

proceed from high and generous motives, which lead exalted characters to act differently from the multitude. Let me persuade you to pass it over, and have nothing more to say to him. When he has considered the matter, he will be certain that our conduct has been irreproachable, and repent his behaviour to yourself."

Convinced at once by what she said, Teihchungyu replied, "Lady, I confess that I have trusted too much to the rectitude of my intentions, and behaved with too much impetuosity:—too well satisfied with myself, I have treated others with too little consideration. Awakened by your excellent advice, I begin to be sensible that my past acts were the result of passion, rather than of reason and justice. As I treated others with violence, it was natural they should seek to do me mischief; and even the Chehëen's conduct was nothing more than what my rashness drew upon itself. Charmed by your observations, I lose no time in benefiting by them:—no more will I assume that rude and boisterous demeanour. How happy is my fate, to find in yourself not only a benefactress and guardian, but likewise the best of counsellors!"

With an impulse of joy and satisfaction he filled up a cup and drank it off; while his hostess replied, "Sir, your disinterested acts of courage and self-devotion proceeded not so much from reflection, as from a natural generosity implanted in you by heaven itself. I cannot suppose it is in my power to benefit you by my poor advice:

advice : what I have said was chiefly to induce you to forgive the Chehëen."

" I shall certainly follow your instructions," said he, " and forgive the injuries he has done me. But something yet remains. I am afraid that what has passed will not allow him to forget *me* ; and although our relative situations put it out of his power to injure me, my apprehension is that from revenge to myself he may seek to sully your reputation. Your conduct has been such as to defy scandal,—yet even unjust scandal is not a thing to be despised, and it will certainly be promoted by my remaining here. Having already to thank you for the complete restoration of my health, it is advisable that I take my departure early to-morrow, in order to stop the calumnious mouths of malicious people."

" I invited you," replied she, " to take up your lodging here contrary to the usages of the world, which would discountenance such a step ; but there was a sufficient reason in the depth of my obligations, and in the extremity of your danger. Being now recovered, your departure or stay depends entirely upon yourself, I will not pretend to detain you. Yet to-morrow seems a little soon : let me request you to fix it for two or three days hence : it will then seem as if I had done something more in return for your valuable services."

" Lady," replied he, " my respect for your opinion is such that I cannot but accede to it." This said, the attendants presented more wine ; and Teihchungyu was

so agreeably inspired, that he resumed : “ Stranger as I am, it does not perhaps befit me to trouble you with so much of my speech, but ‘ when a bright mirror* is suspended before me, I cannot but avail myself of its reflection,’ and therefore address you with less scruple. I am nearly twenty, and, thanks to my friends, have been provided with a great number of good instructors, but never met with one whose eloquence made much impression on my natural temper. By an unexpected happiness, I have now encountered an instructress whose words place my mind in entire subjection. I may truly say, ‘ to the authors of my existence I owe my life ; but to my friend I owe that which makes life valuable.’† Gladly would I remain here, to be daily benefited by your advice : the laws of custom, however, forbid this :—in a day or two I must depart, and leave the high-road of instruction for the bye-paths of uncertainty and doubt. There is a question, however, I would yet ask, if I thought you would give me permission.”

“ You are going,” replied the young lady, “ to inquire the way of the blind, and my ignorance will only expose me to your scorn ; yet the great and wise have not disdained to question the rude and ignorant, and the subject

* They compare a true friend to a polished mirror, by which a man obtains a correct knowledge of himself.

† A saying, in allusion to the story of two persons, one of whom being rich and powerful, furnished the other, who was his friend, with assistance and advice.

subject of your hesitation is no doubt worthy of attention. Pray then propose what you have to say, that I may benefit by it myself."

He replied: "I arrived at this place in the prosecution of a tour of instruction: but it has appeared to me, that travelling without a fixed object is to travel in vain. It is said, too, that 'what is suited to one part of the empire is not suited to another,'"* In my unsettled wanderings, I have found it equally impossible to determine whither I should go, and what I should inquire after. As you have already proved yourself my best guide, let me entreat you to give me this advice also."

"The tour of the empire," replied Shueypingsin, doubtless affords the most extensive field of inquiry; but not a better place of instruction than your own home. The example of the illustrious is the most honoured mode of improvement; but it is better still to possess their virtues as a gift from nature. Changlee is recorded to have said, 'Had the world never seen a Confucius, then would not Hanyu have ranked as a disciple,' which implies a reliance on natural gifts; and in like manner would your disinterested virtues have raised you far above a subordinate rank; had Confucius never lived. I would propose, that you neglect not what is at hand in the search of that which is more remote, nor depend upon others in preference to yourself. Instead of wandering

* Literally, 'A good boat is of use in the south: a good horse in the north;'—because the south abounds in rivers, and the north in roads.

dering in search of knowledge, return home and study there. Your father enjoys a high station at the capital : he is your best example. Peking, too, is the residence of the Emperor, and the centre of learning and wisdom. You need not be ashamed of inheriting your father's profession and honours, nor of occupying a place at court. Why wander alone and independent to the limits of the earth, extorting praise from those who are not known to you ? Do you wish to escape envy and strife ?—this is hardly an object ; for all the paths of life abound in contests and trouble—where can you escape them ? Such is my opinion, if you approve it.”

Teihchungyu was so charmed by her discourse, that he rose with enthusiasm from the table at which he sat, and bending in the direction of the screen : “ Lady,” said he, “ your words have cleared up my mind, and entirely removed my doubts ; accept, I pray you, my best acknowledgments for your kindness.” The attendants observing him, lost no time in presenting the great cup,* which he did not refuse ; but taking it in his hands, drank off the contents, and then proceeded : “ Whence, is it, lady, that you, whom I should not suppose to count more than twice eight years, have acquired such wisdom and knowledge ? To estimate your sentiments properly, they exceed the powers of the wisest

* *Takwong*, ‘ a great cup made of rhinoceros’ horn.’ Such cups are sometimes met with at present, carved into fantastic, and not inelegant shapes. The rhinoceros’ horn is frequently used for studding waist-belts, and for other ornamental purposes.

wisest sages and brightest stars of learning ;—they could proceed only from one compounded, like yourself, of the finest elements in nature. I am subdued by my admiration and respect !”

“ Alas ! sir,” replied she, my childish talk can ill deserve the praise of wisdom. I have taken advantage of your good opinion to express my poor sentiments, and your undeserved praises cover me with confusion.”*

The conversation had been carried on so long and with such spirit, and Teihchungyu had taken so much wine, that he feared he might be guilty of some indiscreet speech by staying longer : he, therefore, quitted the table, and taking leave of his hostess, thanked her for her hospitality. She did not offer to detain him, but said : “ I would ask you, sir, to sit longer, were it not for the fear lest on your first recovery it might do you harm.” Her attendants were then directed to take lights, and escort her guest to his own chamber.

Thus ended this entertainment, at which all the conversation that passed was overheard, and the growing friendship observed between the hostess and her guest, without a single word which could bear an ill-construction.

Th’ unblemished gem reflects the purest ray,
And the blue lily, free from speck or stain,
Breathes odours exquisite—so shone the maid,
Unlike her frailer prototype, whose heart,
Touch’d by the lute,† a theme bequeath’d for song.

We

* The original conveys the same idea as—

‘ Salsusque per artus Sudor iit.’

Virgil applies this expression to a goddess.—*Æneid*, B. v

† See notes to appendix.

We leave Shueypingsin, who having directed her people to wait on Teihchungyu until he was asleep, and settled the affairs of her house, retired to rest ;—and proceed to Tanyew, concealed as he was on the main-beam of the hall, where he had distinctly seen and heard all that passed below. He waited only until every thing was quiet, when he crept down from his hiding-place, and stealing across the premises, got out at the wall where he had entered. The night being far advanced, he went to his own home to sleep, but with the break of day proceeded to the magistrate with his report.

That officer took him into a private apartment, and commenced a minute inquiry into the result of his mission. The emissary related in the clearest manner every thing as it happened : his concealment in the roof,—the semi-transparent screen across the hall—the table spread outside for Teihchungyu, with its two bright tapers, shedding a snowy lustre—the other table spread within for the young lady herself, without lights, and in comparative obscurity—the carpets of ceremony on each side of the screen, the mutual compliments, and the four salutations ;—and lastly, the entertainment of which they each partook. “ During the conversation,” said he, “ it was observed by Teihchungyu that his severe illness was an injury inflicted by your worship ; but as you had not contrived to kill him, it was possible he might find an occasion of effecting your destruction in return.”

Here the magistrate, in the utmost consternation, exclaimed,

exclaimed, "How was it he threatened to injure me?"

"He said," replied the other, "that the governor of the province was his father's official comrade;* that he should first of all break his way into your worship's hall; and ask you why, instead of behaving like a parent to those under your authority, and redressing their wrongs, you treated them like a cruel vulture or dog, for the sake of favouring persons in power. When he had disgraced your worship, and made you the scorn and ridicule of the whole district, he proposed calling on the governor to degrade you from office—then arrest, and submit you to trial."

The Chehëen, on hearing this, struck his feet against the ground in the greatest trepidation. "How!"—cried he, and would have ordered his people on the instant to exhibit a notice, declaring that his worship could hear no causes to-day; but Tanyew told him not to be alarmed, for Teihchungyu was not coming after all.

"How not coming?" demanded the magistrate.

"Thanks to the young lady," replied the spy, "she dissuaded him from it repeatedly, by urging that your attempts to injure him arose naturally from the outrage he had committed on your worship; she observed, too, that persons of *their* superior characters naturally behaved in a great and exalted manner, which vulgar-minded

* Tungnëen, 'same year,' means one who was preferred to literary or official rank in the same year.

minded people like yourself could not be expected to comprehend ; and she said that your worship, perceiving her father was exiled, while the father of Kwoketsu had been promoted to the Emperor's privy-council, *therefore* favoured the son of the latter—which was another proof of meanness of mind, and accordingly you were beneath his notice.* She observed, besides, that the services they had rendered each other were a sufficient cause to make people suspect they were urged by private motives ; but your worship must soon discover that they were as clear and unspotted as ice or crystal, and therefore repent your conduct ; she added, that after the labour and application which the attainment of your degrees had cost you, it was a pity to ruin you on such an occasion as this. The young man declared that she was quite right, and felt so well pleased with her sentiments, that he entirely abandoned his intentions of revenge."

The magistrate was delighted. "This young lady," exclaimed he, "is an admirable person ; I rejoice that I sent her safely home on the last occasion from my office. But what said they besides—was there any conversation of an irregular nature ?"

"Their whole discourse," replied the other, "turned on letters, and on characters celebrated for virtue and wisdom."

* The Chinese author displays some art in obliging the Chehëen to listen to a string of the worst possible compliments to himself. The obvious moral conveyed, is the degrading situation to which a man is reduced, by making use of worthless agents in the prosecution of bad actions.

wisdom. They complimented each other's eloquence, and each seemed to relish the harmony of the other's sentiments. They carried on their conversation, in the intervals of the entertainment, during a whole watch.* So much was said that I cannot recollect it; but every word did I hear distinctly, all of the most respectful and decorous nature,—not a phrase nor an idea that could bear any ill construction. The worthies of old must surely be revived in their persons!”

The magistrate listened in silence, but could scarcely bring himself to believe it. “What,” exclaimed he, “could a young woman, beautiful as a flower—could a young man, bright as a gem, pass the evening alone in the same house, and sit at the same entertainment, possessing as they do great intellectual accomplishments, and being mutually beholden to each other—could they pass a whole evening without being moved, and conduct themselves like the characters recorded in history or fable? You have certainly been deceiving me for their sakes!”

“Sir,” replied the other, “I have no connexion with them, and never received the least gift at their hands. Why should I utter falsehoods on their account, injurious to your worship?”

Convinced at last that it must be true, the magistrate expressed his admiration. “Who shall maintain,” said he with a sigh, “that the old times are not rivalled by the present! This Teihchungyu is an extraordinary hero,

* A period of two hours.

hero, highly gifted by nature ; and this Shueypingsin as extraordinary a heroine, equally beholden to education ! The authority of this district being in my hands, I ought to make known their merits, and obtain for them some mark of distinction* from the Emperor."

He proceeded to remit the punishment of Tanyew according to promise, and directed him to be set at large ; after which he began to soliloquize thus : " Official power and influence must have their sway,† yet extraordinary and admirable persons like this youth and maiden should not be subject to their effects. Besides, the one is daughter to a member of the military tribunal, the other, son to one of the censorate ; how could I be such a fool as to attempt injuring them ! Let me suppose that his just resentment had led this youth to complain of me to my superiors, it would have been a little too late to seek the protection of the minister ! Again, it befits me, who have attained by my exertions to the first

* The local magistrate is expected to notice (through his superiors) to the Emperor, any great examples of merit among those under his jurisdiction : and persons even of extraordinary age, or with an unusual number of descendants, are sometimes reported in this manner.

† It is the mistaken policy of the Chinese government to allow its delegates in great measure to pay themselves. The regular salary of an officer of rank is inadequate to his station ; the most virtuous rob the people the least, but they nearly all avail themselves of the " devil's plea, necessity." The observations of Montesquieu regarding Turkey are, (though with very considerable reservation), applicable to China. The real taxation of this country is not to be estimated from statistical or official returns, or from what reaches the coffers of the government : a portion consists in the fruits of official malversation.

first literary rank, and who am not uncelebrated, to deserve men's approbation by deeds of worth, instead of merely following the stream of example—a manifest injustice to myself. It seems, too, that this young lady respected my literary rank, and predicted my reformation: how then can I neglect to respect myself, or allow this reformation to be delayed! Where can such a reformation more properly commence, than in the instance of these two persons? Considering the disinterested courage and other splendid qualities of this Teihchungyu, if he be not united to Shueypingsin, there is none else fit for him:—and to estimate properly the almost fabulous mental endowments of this Shueypingsin, if it be not Teihchungyu, there is none to match her. How can I do better than change my course entirely, and devote myself to the completion of their mutual happiness? Thus I may at once throw my past errors into shade, and behave in a manner befitting my respectable station.”

Scarcely had he made this resolution, when Kwoketsu came in to hear the news. The magistrate told him all that he had learned from the spy, and concluded with this advice: “My good friend, you must not attempt to treat her as an ordinary female of the same age. I have no difficulty in perceiving from her behaviour that she is a very uncommon and admirable person—she will never be compelled to throw herself away. Take my advice, and give up all thoughts of her: you may easily find some other object of pursuit.”

Satisfied

Satisfied now that the intercourse between Teihchungyu and Shueypingsin afforded not the slightest ground for scandal, and perceiving that the Chehëen very bluntly took leave of his cause, Kwoketsu became convinced of the hopelessness of his schemes:—he stood stupified for some moments, and then walked off.

The magistrate sent messengers to inquire if Teihchungyu had left his temporary lodging, and desired them to ascertain when our hero really intended to return home, as he had some particular plans in relation to him. But to learn the result—to see the hardness of the gem resist friction, and its purity triumph over defilement, the reader must peruse the following chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ AN AFFRONTING PROPOSAL OCCASIONS THE SUDDEN
DEPARTURE OF TEIHCHUNGYU.”

Nor branch nor root connected them, nor aught
But their fair virtues were their bond of union :
The vulgar form a judgment from th' outside—
These by the emulous course of noble deeds
Each other knew—Lo, as when rain and winds
Are rife, fair summer flowers their petals close ;
Or, as when misty clouds approach her orb,
The delicate moon seems to contract her brows :
—So did our hero meet the paltry knave,
Whose notions with his own accorded well
As round with square !

THE magistrate, convinced as he was by his emissary of the rare virtues of Teihchungyu and Shueypingsin, became inspired with the utmost respect and regard for both, and lost no time in celebrating them to every one. Indifferent persons uttered some expressions of surprise, and then thought no more about it ; but the uncle Shueyun was led to soliloquize thus : “ My late endeavours to bring about the marriage of my niece with Kwoketsu did not arise from any wish that she should espouse *him* in particular ; for were she but married at all, I should possess the management of my brother's property. That young man's chance is now quite gone ; but she has luckily formed a great friendship for this other youth, and in spite of what

what I hear concerning their mutual reserve, I am pretty sure it is all assumed, in order to screen themselves from scandal—in their hearts they must secretly wish for marriage; and if I only go and propose the agreeable subject, it cannot but delight them. Should my endeavours succeed, the family property will come under my management of course.”

No sooner was his resolution formed than he unlocked the private door, and went over in search of his niece, whom he thus addressed: “The proverb* says ‘the drum that is not beat will not sound; the bell that is not struck will not ring;’ and moreover, ‘The eyes that are ailing for ten days will in nine more cure themselves.’ Your behaviour to Teihchungyu excited other people’s doubts, as well as my own, and we little expected that you would both turn out to be ‘the pure metal which dreads no fire.’ The perfect propriety with which you evinced your mutual gratitude, and the total absence of clandestine motives, have converted suspicion into admiration and respect.”

“My conduct,” replied his niece, “was different from the reserve usually maintained between the sexes; but the misfortune of Teihchungyu being in-

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curred

* These proverbs are trite and stupid enough, and seem put into the speaker’s mouth to make him appear ridiculous. The first probably refers to the proof that had been made of his niece’s virtue—the second, to the re-establishment of her reputation.

curred in my defence, I could not endure to act otherwise: I overstepped empty forms for the sake of rescuing him from real danger. Neither is what I have done without a sanction in the example of the wise and virtuous; and as he is now happily recovered, I have no more anxieties on the subject. With respect to what you say concerning my behaviour, it was merely what decency required of me, and therefore quite unentitled to the compliments you pay it."

"Do yourself justice," replied he—"Such people as Loonantsze and Lewheahoey* are of rare occurrence;—but let that rest. I have not forgotten that I am your uncle, and come here with a proposition of some consequence. Believe me that it is for your own good, and do not suspect my intentions."

"Every proposal," said his niece, "must be measured by the rules of conscience and propriety: if allowable, let it be adopted; if not, it must be rejected. You say your intention is good, and therefore I will not entertain any suspicion to the contrary; but let me ask what it is you mean?"

"The old maxim," he began, "well observes, 'When a youth is grown up, let him marry; when a maiden is grown up, let her become the mistress of a family.' You are still very young, but not too young for the nuptial union. If my brother were here, he would

* See note, p. 128.

would be your proper adviser ; but as he is unhappily exiled to the frontier, and his return wholly uncertain, the farther postponement of your marriage does not seem expedient. I urged you before to espouse the minister's son, because he was constantly pressing me, and I could not get rid of him : but your late admirable conduct has shewn you to be far removed above ordinary females : and this Kwoketsu, though he belongs to a rich and powerful family, is a contemptible fellow, and no match whatever for you. Plenty of young men might be found in the empire with advantages equal to his ; but to discover one who joins the qualities of a hero to youth and great accomplishments—one who could be considered as a proper counterpart to yourself, is not so easy. Heaven, however, when it produced the prodigy Mengkwong, did not fail at the same time to create a Leanghoey ; and when it gave birth to yourself, who have displayed such rare excellencies, it provided for you a Teihchungyu. He possesses not only youth, and talents, and personal attractions, but in addition to all these, every quality of a hero or worthy of old times. Constrained by the peculiar circumstances in which you found yourselves, good feeling urged you to recompense each other's services ; and now, therefore, you are unwilling to originate the subject of marriage ; but I, your uncle, can view the subject dispassionately, and consider that the mutual requital of

of benefits is not likely to happen more than once, while wedlock would secure your common welfare for life ; it should not, therefore, be neglected."

"The intentions of heaven," replied the young lady, "are beyond our reach, and we must be governed by the course of human events. Heaven produced Confucius to be a sage, and not a prince ; and gave birth to the beautiful Mingfei to espouse the Tartar Chenyu* instead of the Emperor. These were the destinies of their lives, and beyond the control of either. There is nothing personal about Teihchungyu which could create an objection to what you propose ; but the circumstances in which we have chanced to be placed in relation to each other put marriage out of the question."

"Your mutual good offices and friendship," said her uncle, "are quite consistent with marriage ; why should they put it out of the question ?"

"The rites of wedlock," Shueypingsin replied, "demand that it be first proposed to the parents by authorized persons ; when their consent is obtained, the parties may contract the union : but, unhappily, *our* first meeting occurred in an irregular and unexpected rencontre at the magistrate's ; and when Teihchungyu subsequently fell sick, I was compelled to receive him at my own house. Our mutual gratitude
and

* Otherwise called Chaoukeun and Hanchenyu. Their history forms the subject of the Chinese tragedy appended to this romance.

and friendship were thereby complete ; but this is not the mode of contracting marriage among scrupulous and exalted characters."

"Remember," said her uncle, "what you observed the other day, about the license afforded by particular exigencies."

"Such exigencies," answered she, "are of rare occurrence, and when they are past, we must not invent fictitious ones. Besides, a certain freedom of action may be allowed in all things except so important a concern as marriage, which, being the chief of human relations, should be scrupulously regulated from first to last—it does not allow of any such latitude."

"There is no need to talk in that style," cried the other ; "your acquaintance began in difficulty and distress, yet every body knows that neither of you had any sinister intentions, and accordingly there can be no objection on that score."

"The proof of our motives being innocent," replied the young lady, "depends on our not concluding this acquaintance by marriage ; we shall then be consistent to the end. Were we to finish with wedlock, who would believe that we began without any views towards it ? It concerns our reputation through life, and must never be—I trust that you will consider the subject in a proper light."

Perceiving that she would not listen to him, Shueyun began

pun began to be angry. "What has a girl of your age to do," exclaimed he, "with a style of talking which would better suit some decayed old pedant! However, I say nothing more to you at present; but will go and consult Teihchungyu himself. He is the person you respect above all others, and if he consents, you will hardly venture to do otherwise." So saying, away he went to call upon the youth.

Our hero was sitting quietly in the library when his page announced that the younger brother of Shueykeuyih from the adjoining house had arrived to see him. He went out to receive his visitor, and invited him to take the guest's seat. Shueyun began the discourse, by excusing himself for not calling before, on account of particular engagements: while Teihchungyu, in like manner, pleaded the state of his health for not having anticipated him. The other then opened his business, by saying that he came on purpose to make a proposal, and being asked what this might be, replied, "It is no other than the marriage of my niece."

Teihchungyu's indignation made him change colour. "You mistake, sir," exclaimed he; "I am a stranger, and should expect you to propose any subject directly to myself* rather than your niece's marriage!"

"I know,"

* The intervention of negociators is an indispensable form in a regular marriage.

"I know," said the other, "that I ought not to mention it directly to yourself; but when my niece was carried off the other day by Kwoketsu, she was indebted to your courage for her rescue, and that is my reason for making the proposal."

"What I did then," replied Teihchungyu, "was the effect of momentary indignation at a case of oppression which fell in my way—there was no premeditation in it; but what you say now you have prepared yourself for. You no doubt think that because I accepted a lodging here, I am so low and depraved a character as to allow you to propose any thing you please. I therefore take my departure at once, that you may waste no words upon me."

Shueyun perceived that he was offended, and endeavoured to pacify him. "Pray, sir," said he, "do not take amiss what I have suggested: my intention is good, and if you will only sit down and hear me out, you will be sensible that it is for the benefit of all."

"I have heard," replied Teihchungyu, "that a man of principle will neither speak of, nor listen to, what is improper in itself. You had better say nothing more, for though you may imagine there is no harm in it, my way of thinking is so different from your own, that what appears good to the one, may seem just the reverse to the other! I take my departure without asking any more questions." With this he rose from his seat, and addressing himself to
one

one of the domestics of the family, said, "Pray offer my respects to your lady, and tell her, that my feelings of gratitude for her kindness could never be surpassed; but that I am prevented from taking leave of her by some insulting language which has just been addressed to me." This said, he called his page and walked out at the door.

Shueyun ran after to detain him; but the other had already got out of his reach. Confounded and abashed, he could not return to Shueypingsin. "What a silly, passionate fellow is this!" cried he—"I must give him up as my niece's husband!" So saying, he found his way home as fast as he could.

He thought his flattering phrases needs must prove
Welcome—nor dream'd of foul repulse and shame!
And had not bounteous heaven his forehead arm'd
With impudence unmatch'd, this keen rebuff
Had stung him!

When Shueypingsin saw her uncle was determined to carry his proposal to our hero, she felt quite aware of the probable consequences. Fully prepared for his departure, and fearing lest he might not have time to provide for his journey, she put up a number of travelling requisites, together with ten taëls in broken silver, which she intrusted to a faithful domestic, desiring him to be in waiting on the outside of the city-gate, and present them to the young gentleman as he went, without seeming to know what had passed.

For

For ever in the rearward of th' occasion,
The blund'rer plods—t' anticipate the future
Is Wisdom's part! Where sense and spirit beam,
They deck each sex alike—Where talent shines,
In youth or age, what matter?

Teihchungyu, on his departure with his page, went straight to the monastery, and taking his station before the entrance, ordered the boy to go in and demand his travelling furniture from the priest. The latter, when he heard that he was at the door, came out in a great hurry, and with a low obeisance tried to persuade him to go in and take some tea. "I am ignorant, sir," said he, "of the cause of your late resentment and sudden departure. His worship accused me of not being attentive enough, and persecuted me in a hundred ways. He desired me to find out where you were; and since it is my good fortune to see you here again, you must not be allowed to leave us, or I shall answer for it with my life when the magistrate is informed."

"I chuse to say nothing about what has passed," exclaimed Teihchungyu; "what is it you would have the impudence to propose now? Hear me plainly; I will neither go into your monastery, nor have any of your tea; nor will I see the magistrate. Make haste and bring out my baggage, that I may proceed on my way."

"The servant has your baggage, sir," replied the priest; "but pray do not depart so hastily, and kill me with your unjust anger. I really must not let you go; pray stop, if it were only for a moment."

"What!"

“What!” cried the youth in a rage, “are you such a silly blockhead as to fancy I will be compelled to enter your monastery in broad day for the sake of being poisoned again? Let me advise you not to rely too much on the magistrate’s power to protect your villainy: I have only to proceed to the proper authority to-morrow, to overwhelm a miserable priest like yourself.”

While he said this, a couple of the magistrate’s people came running up, with an invitation to Teihchungyu to visit their master; for the Chehëen, since his repentance, being fully impressed with the merits of the youth, was anxious to form a friendship with him. He had stationed emissaries near Shueypingsin’s house to watch his movements, and as soon as these observed his hasty departure, they lost no time in making their report: upon which the magistrate despatched them at once with his message.

When Teihchungyu heard it, he burst into a loud laugh. “Why,” exclaimed he, “I do not belong to this district; I owe the government no dues; what does your master mean by sending you to me? I suppose he regrets my escaping his plots last time, and begs I will go and have the account settled now.”

The fellows said nothing, but at the same time seemed indisposed to let him pass; upon which he began to be in a passion, and would very soon have handled them roughly; when the people all cried out that “his worship

ship was coming ;”—for the magistrate, guessing that Teihchungyu might not accept his invitation, had called for a horse, and ordering another to be brought after him, rode at a gallop to the spot, where he jumped off, and making the youth a low obeisance, “ Sir,” said he, “ I am duly sensible of my error and blindness in not discerning your merits, and take shame to myself on that account: but awakened to sorrow and repentance, I venture to beg that you will come to my residence, and afford me at once an opportunity of atoning for my past misconduct, and evincing my future gratitude.”

Hearing him speak out in this open way, Teihchungyu began to change his opinion. He returned the other’s salute, and replied : “ Sir,” to tell you the truth, I was proceeding a few days ago to require a great deal at your hands ; but being persuaded by a particular friend to abandon my design, I shall not think again of paying you a visit in your public hall. Your present style is such an improvement on the past, that I really cannot explain it :—do you adopt these manners with a view to practise some farther mischief against me ?”

“ Once was too often !” exclaimed the other ; “ do not think it can be repeated. I have not only to express my gratitude for your own indulgent forgiveness, but the kind eloquence of the young lady in my favour I can never forget.”

“ How ?” said the youth with surprise, “ what has

so

so suddenly wrought this favourable change in your sentiments? I own it is most surprising."

"You have been so good as to listen to me thus far," replied the Chehëen; "and I therefore venture to request your company at my residence, where I have something very particular to mention."

Observing the great change which had taken place in his manners and speech, Teihchungyu made no objection to the proposal; but mounting the other horse, rode with him briskly towards his residence. When they had arrived there, and seated themselves, Teihchungyu begged the magistrate to let him hear what he had to say without loss of time, since he had some distance to travel.

"But why are you determined to go to-day," inquired the other; "why in such haste to depart?"

"I would willingly have deferred it a day or two," replied Teihchungyu, "and taken a little time to express my gratitude to my benefactress: but a certain person insulted me with so impertinent a proposition, that I was compelled to depart."

"May I be allowed to ask what person and what proposition you allude to?" asked the magistrate.

"The person was Shueypingsin's uncle," said the youth, "and he proposed directly to myself that I should marry his niece."

"The man is bad enough," observed the other; "but there was no harm in what he proposed: why did you refuse to listen to him?"

Teihchungyu

Teihchungyu replied, "I will not deceive you; my meeting with Shueypingsin was quite accidental; but our mutual obligations became afterwards so great, that we cast off some part of the reserve which is customarily maintained between the sexes, and behaved to each other as friends. Although this has had its precedents in the heroic ages, it is not conformable with modern custom. The abrupt proposal of marriage by the uncle implied, that like ordinary persons we would effect a dishonourable union by clandestine and irregular means. I certainly could not listen to such a scheme, and therefore left him contemptuously* before he had done speaking."

"There are two ways of viewing the matter," observed the magistrate, "and I hope you will not remain so inflexible."

"How two ways?" inquired the youth.

"Had there been any thing clandestine," replied he, "it would doubtless be an abuse of the institution of marriage, to borrow it as a pretext for continuing your acquaintance; but if, on the contrary, you consider the difficulty of meeting with a worthy match, and endeavour to conclude so excellent an union, what possible objection can there be, or why need you avoid her like an enemy? I asked you to accompany me hither, well knowing that a person of your stamp was not to be bribed by gifts, nor detained by feasts and entertainments; but

* *Füh tsew*, 'to flap one's sleeve' in a man's face.

but a union of this kind, manifestly ordained by heaven, and to which there appears not the slightest impediment,—such a union calls for the exertion of every worthy person towards its accomplishment. Did I stand idle by, it were an unpardonable omission! This was my object in inviting you hither; and I earnestly hope you will abandon your resolution, nor allow so excellent an opportunity to escape you.”

Teihchungyu sighed. “Alas! sir,” replied he, “why talk in this way? The human relations* are not to be confounded: the prince and subject cannot return to the relative condition of friends; and this young lady and myself, who have proved such useful friends to each other in adversity, cannot contract the obligations of marriage. Were I to persuade myself to such a step, all that has passed between us would look like a concerted scheme: indeed it cannot be!”

“I am surprised to find you so unnecessarily punctilious,” said the magistrate. “Had you been inclined to act like some pedantic moralist, you would not have gone to the young lady’s house to be cured of your sickness—then why now, while every one is convinced of your rectitude, be so afraid of suspicion as to decline tying the silken knot? Your past and present conduct are at such variance, that I cannot understand you.”

Teihchungyu replied, “When matters are desperate, and admit of no retreat, a virtuous man will yet retain the
desire

* Vide ante, page 5, note.

desire to vindicate the purity of his character whenever occasion offers: but if he continue without necessity to act so as to excite slander, relying too much on the integrity of his motives, there is danger lest he degenerate into the vicious confidence of inferior characters. I know not for what reason, whether of good-will or enmity, you take such an interest in this business."

"My late disposition," said the magistrate, "inclined me too much to flow with the stream of corruption in matters of authority; but the danger which I incurred from your resolution to bring me to account, inspired me with fear and repentance, while the kind intercession of Shueypingsin in my favour excited my gratitude. I was led to reflect that an abuse of authority frequently leads to calamitous results, while a steady course of rectitude is attended with a peculiar satisfaction of the heart:—why, then, foolishly prejudice myself by deserting the virtuous, and taking part with the worthless side? This was the cause of my reformation. But the essence of true contrition consists in endeavouring to atone for former errors by after-acts of merit. When I perceived your superior qualities, and the more than feminine virtues of this young lady, I could not but suppose that heaven had brought you together on purpose. Had I been uninformed, then well—but as I had seen your virtues displayed in public, and heard of them in private, any omission on my part to perfect a

match which has been equalled only in romance, would have proved me unmindful of the duties of my station. It constitutes the chief obligation of my public office, and I am bound to exert all my energies to effect it. Private feelings of gratitude are a minor motive."

"Ah!" said Teihchungyu, laughing, "you make a great mistake in confessing so much—you have no objection to obtain a little credit at the expense of my being betrayed into a wrong act."

"If you say so," replied the other, "I must explain myself farther. Your fear of being betrayed into what is wrong, proves you to be a good judge of what is right. If Shueypingsin with such admirable intelligence and virtue has discomfited all the plots of her enemies, and if in recompensing your services, she has at the same time displayed the purity and excellence of her own mind, into what wrong act could you be betrayed by espousing her?"

"That is not the point," said the youth. "No regular marriage can take place without originating on the part of the parents: it is not for the parties themselves to decide. But where are mine in this case—where those of Shueypingsin? The union you propose is founded merely on what we know of each other by a casual meeting. A rightful marriage can never have such an origin as this: it might do very well for such people as Kwoketsu; but the principles which I profess will not permit me to think of it."

He

He now rose from his seat, and prepared to depart, when the magistrate said, "There is no time at present to enter fully into the question, but I shall be satisfied, if you do not ultimately conclude the union, that it was wrong—if you do conclude it, I shall be convinced that it was right. I entreat you will keep what I have said in mind, and you may at some future day be convinced that my proposal arose from good intentions, the result of my late repentance—not from a mean desire of flattering your wishes. Being resolved to depart, I despair of being able to detain you. An offer of any entertainment from myself, you might suspect to be treachery, and a present you would probably reject: neither of these, then, can I venture to propose; but if it be the will of heaven, I trust we may meet once more, that I may have an opportunity of proving my sincerity."

"I am much obliged to you," replied Teihchungyu, "for all you have taken the trouble to say, but your last words will be deeply treasured in my heart—many thanks, many thanks!" So saying, he took his leave, and accompanied by Seaoutan in charge of his things, sallied out at the eastern gate of the city.

No falsehood stain'd his nature ; nought could change
His purpose—led by measur'd rule of right
Fearless he walk'd. Alas ! that worldly chance
No course uncheck'd permits—without his fault
A strange mishap awaited him !

In his haste to leave the place, Teihchungyu had made no provision of any kind for the journey, and

when his page reminded him of the necessity of procuring a beast to ride, he was thrown into a perplexity. Fortunately, however, the emissary of Shueypingsin then appeared, and expressed his surprise at seeing our hero so late in that place, where he had been waiting since the morning by his lady's order. Being asked the purpose of his mission, the man replied, "When my lady saw her uncle going to visit you, sir, she was aware that he might give offence by some rude speech,* and occasion your sudden departure. She would not attempt to detain you; but fearful lest you might want time for preparation, she ordered me to be in waiting here with some supplies for your journey."

Charmed by this instance of her attention, Teih-chungyu replied, "I not only feel extremely grateful to your lady for her recollection, but her sagacious foresight and providence inspire me with the highest respect."

The servant now said he must return, and asked if there were any commands for him. "Your lady and myself," replied the youth, "met by mere chance on the highway; if I would speak of the obligations she has since conferred on me, they are too deep for expression,—if I would mention other feelings, there are none which our present situation allows me to utter. Present, however, my most respectful regards to your lady, and say that I trust she will give herself no concern about me hereafter, though for my own part I never can forget the

* This seems contrary to the injunction he had received, page 186.

the gratitude which I owe." The man then delivered what he had in charge to the page, who was directed by his master to provide a mule without loss of time, after which they proceeded on their journey towards Tongchin.

Having left their recent lodging somewhat late in the day, and lost much time at the magistrate's, it began to get dark before they had proceeded above three leagues onward. They were still nearly a league from their halting-place, when the mule on which Teihchungyu was mounted refused to stir another step on any consideration, so his rider was obliged to dismount and walk. They had proceeded in this manner a very short distance, and were just turning the angle of a wood, when they perceived running towards them, in apparent trepidation, a young man bearing a bundle on his shoulder, accompanied by a female in a blue dress, with a cloth wrapped round her head. The instant these saw the youth, they were both seized with a panic, and would have escaped into the wood; but Teihchungyu perceiving there was something extraordinary, cried out, "Where are you running away with that woman?"

The female was in such a fright that she could not stir a step, but stood stupified, screaming out to him to spare her life: while the other, not much less alarmed, abandoned his companion, and throwing away the bundle, began to run as if his existence depended on it. The youth, however, soon overtook
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and seized him, demanding who he was, and promising to spare him if he spoke the truth. The captive fell down on his knees, and prostrating himself several times, exclaimed, "Spare my life, sir, and I will tell you every thing. This woman is mistress to a person named Letaekoong, at the village farther on ; she is called Taouche,* and being resolved to desert her home, prevailed on me to bring her away, and secrete her for some time from pursuit."

"Then you make yourself out to be a rascally kidnapper !" said Teihchungyu.

"No, sir," exclaimed the other, "I am not indeed ; I am the son† of Letaekoong's daughter." Being asked his name, he said it was Seuenyin.

"Are you sure you are speaking truth ?" said Teihchungyu. The other loudly disclaimed all wish to deceive him, and as there seemed no reason to disbelieve what he said, the youth loosed his hold of the prisoner, who no sooner felt himself at liberty than he jumped up and ran away. Turning to where the young woman stood, Teihchungyu asked her if she were not so and so ?—to which she replied in the affirmative. "Then
be

* 'Peach blossom,' or 'sprig of peach.'

† The Chinese make a wide distinction between a son's and a daughter's children. The latter are called Waesun, "alien grandchildren," as belonging to another family, and having another surname :—the former, Nuysun, "domestic grandchildren," as living at home, and perpetuating the family. The children of sisters can intermarry, having different surnames ;—the children of brothers cannot, having the same.

be under no alarm," said he; "I am going in the direction of your home, and will see you safely there; will that suit you?"

"If I return home," replied she, "they will accuse me of running away intentionally, and I shall have no means of clearing myself—but if you have any occasion for my services, sir, I am very ready to follow you."

Teihchungyu could not help laughing at this proposition. "Very well," said he, "follow me, and we will talk the matter over on our way." He desired his page to bring the bundle with them towards the village; and the girl, perceiving there was nothing else to be done, walked on in their company.

They had not proceeded above the tenth part of a league, before they were met by a crowd of persons running at full speed, who as soon as they came close up, and perceived the girl in company with a young man, began to cry out with one voice, "We have found them—here they are!" The party then formed themselves into a circle round the three persons, while some of their number were sent off to acquaint Letae-koong.

"Do not make such a clamour," said Teihchungyu to the crowd; "I fell in with this woman just now, and brought her on with me."

"We know nothing about that," cried they altogether; "come and explain yourself to the officer of the village."

When

When they had proceeded together a very little way, they were met by another crowd, with a blaze of torches. This proved to be no other than Letaekoong in person, who had run thither on the first summons, and seeing his mistress in company with a young and good-looking youth like Teihchungyu, presently fell into an extacy of rage. Without stopping to ask any questions, he held his fist to the stranger's breast, and began to abuse him. "You profligate thief!" cried he, "you have carried off my favourite mistress; but I will be revenged on you, or it shall cost me my life!"

"What a silly old fellow you are," said Teihchungyu pushing him on one side, "to fly into such a rage with me! Your mistress was carried off by somebody else, and I rescued her for you—instead of assailing me so rudely, you should be very grateful for the favour."

This only put the other into a greater fury. He began to roar and stamp as he exclaimed, "Who carried her off?—bring him here and let me see him—where did you meet him?—who saw it?" Then pointing first to the woman, and next to the bundle carried by the boy, "Is not this my mistress?" continued he; "is not that my property?" He now proceeded to abuse the girl, and to ask her whither she intended to run?

Seeing the humour he was in, Teihchungyu began to laugh at him. "Don't be in a passion," said he, "you see the girl is very safe!"

The

The crowd now interfered, and told the old man it was too dark to make any thing of the matter where they were—better proceed, then, to the officer of the village, and get him to elicit the truth by threats of torture. He assented to this, and they all went on in a body towards the place.

It so happened that this village officer, being a mere clerk delegated by a higher authority, was glad enough of such an occasion as the present. The moment he heard that somebody had enticed away one of the family of Letaekoong, whom he knew to be the richest man in the place, his covetousness was excited ; he affected to regard it as a most serious affair, put on his cap and garment of ceremony, and ranging his fellows in order, took his seat with as much grandeur as he could assume.

They all entered in a body, and the old man, kneeling down, made the customary report of his own name, and that of his mistress, stating how the latter had been carried off while the doors were left open—how he had engaged people to pursue in different directions—and the manner in which she had been overtaken. Then pointing to Teihchungyu, “ There is the person,” said he, “ that carried her off, but I cannot tell his name—the stolen property is here too. I entreat, sir, that you will execute the law.”

The officer desired them to bring the culprit before him, and they led Teihchungyu to the front ; where, being ordered to fall on his knees, he only laughed at them.

them. "It is quite enough," said he, "if I do not insist on that man kneeling to me—what do you mean by telling me to kneel to *him*?"

This infuriated the village officer, and he would have proceeded to extremities—but perceiving a dignity in the youth's carriage, which argued that he was no ordinary person, "Who may you be," exclaimed he, "that give yourself such great airs?"

"This," replied Teihchungyu, "is not the supreme court of civil jurisdiction, nor are you the proper authority to question me. Give yourself no trouble about my deportment, but try to be contented with your own humble lot."

Such a reply served only to exasperate the other, who exclaimed, "You appear before me as a criminal and a seducer—I suspect we shall alter your manners before you go."

"Pray how happen you to know," inquired Teihchungyu, "that I am the person who ran away with the woman?"

"This old man lost his mistress," replied he, "and you carried her off—if not yourself, who else should it be?"

"Good!" exclaimed the youth, "she was seen in my company, and *therefore* I carried her off! The chaste Lewheahoey himself, at this rate, was the greatest libertine that ever lived! But you are such a blockhead that I wonder who could be so blind and
stupid

stupid as to depute you to this place, to make yourself ridiculous !”

Somewhat confounded, the other observed, “ I judge, from the readiness and volubility of your speech, that you are some practised and hardened offender ; however, as you chuse to take these liberties on account of the smallness of my station, I shall refer you to-morrow to a higher authority ; we will then see if you dare to repeat such insolence.”

“ No doubt,” cried Teihchungyu, “ your immediate superior must be the emperor himself !”

“ Emperor or not,” said the officer, “ you will find it out soon enough when you arrive there ;”—then turning to Letaekoong : “ It is entirely your own fault ; what business has an old man like you with such a young mistress ?”

The girl herself was next desired to come forward. She was considerably past twenty, but decked out like a vulgar beauty, with a painted and bedizened face ; and when the officer asked her if she had run away of her own accord, or been forced to leave her home, she held down her head and said nothing. “ I shall spare you for the present,” said he, “ but when we have you before a higher tribunal, and give your fingers a pinch, I dare say we shall make you speak.”

The old man himself was desired to take charge of both prisoners, and be answerable for their appearance on the following morning, when a petition
would

would be prepared for him, and presented to the superior tribunal, where he would no doubt obtain redress for the outrage.

Letaekoong was obliged to submit, and conveyed the parties to his own house. He had seen Teihchungyu browbeat the officer, and not knowing who he might prove to be, was afraid to treat him disrespectfully. One of his best rooms was accordingly prepared for the youth, who was invited to take some refreshment. The old man would willingly have consigned the girl to the inner apartments, but, being fearful lest she might there contrive some method of confusing the evidence, he felt obliged to shut her up in the same room with Teihchungyu.

But to pursue our hero through these petty scrapes and difficulties, after he had surmounted such greater troubles, and to ascertain what happened at the next tribunal, the reader must peruse the following chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

“ THEY ATTEMPT TO DECEIVE THE FAIR HEROINE,
BUT ONLY EXCITE HER SCORN.”

By vulgar slander would he gain his ends,
But heaven may not be blinded, nor the sun
Robb'd of his light—in vain his words he wastes
All smooth and flow'ry as they are!—with eyes
Of clearest vision, she perceives his thoughts
In their most deep recesses : while the fool
Throws by the little sense he had, and stands
A butt for scorn !

WHEN he had thus fallen a victim to the stupid blunder of the old man, and to the annoying pomposity and insolence of the village officer, Teihchungyu hardly knew whether to feel angry or be amused :—however, on his arrival at the house of the former they presented him with refreshment, and he eat with a good appetite, without paying much attention to the cookery. He soon after desired Seaoutan to lay out his bed, and presently fell soundly asleep.

The moon was that night at the full, and when he chanced to awake he found the light streaming in through the window, and the girl, who was shut up in the room with him, sitting close by his side, and endeavouring to engage his attention. Teihchungyu started up and threw her from him, rebuking her for such behaviour.

haviour. On receiving this rebuff, the damsel would willingly have left him altogether; but that being impossible, she sat in sulky silence for some time, and then threw herself down to sleep at the foot of the bed.

Now it so happened that the old man, though he felt himself obliged to shut up the two prisoners together, could not set his mind at rest with regard to the girl, and had accordingly placed himself in ambush on the outside of the door. When he heard her put to shame by Teihchungyu, he felt convinced of the innocence of the latter. "It was the slut herself that ran away!" thought he; "I have done this youth an injury in supposing him guilty."

When daylight appeared, he would gladly have released his prisoner; but the village officer having received no money on the occasion, and being provoked moreover by the behaviour of Teihchungyu, had prepared a furious address to his superior. It therefore became necessary that the parties should be conveyed to that tribunal; and the old man called in the assistance of his neighbours, and proceeded towards the office of the superior magistrate.*

It chanced that this very morning was the birth-day of that magistrate, when all the authorities of the district went as usual to pay their respects. The doors were still unclosed, and the visitors waiting outside, when they perceived a crowd

* *Taoutae*, next in rank above a *Chefoo*.

crowd of persons escorting the prisoners towards them, and giving out that it was a case of forcible abduction.

Every body went out to observe the parties, and remarking that the appearance of the youth was greatly superior to the character which his accusers gave him, they put the question to himself, demanding who he was, and for what reason he had carried off the young woman? Teihchungyu, however, did not condescend to give them any reply; and they then turned to the girl, asking her if that young man had carried her off from home?—She, provoked by the slight which she had lately received at the youth's hands, answered very glibly in the affirmative. The same statement was repeated by her to all; and the village officer, considering the point as already settled by such excellent testimony, waited in high spirits until the doors should be thrown open, in order to produce his prisoners, and claim the approbation of his diligence.

In the midst of these self-gratulations, the Chehëen made his appearance. When his chair had been set down, that magistrate observed with astonishment his acquaintance Teihchungyu, and a young woman, surrounded by the crowd. "What is the meaning of this?" exclaimed he.

The village officer, afraid lest somebody might anticipate him, replied in a moment: "This young man, sir, forcibly carried off the female whom you see from her proper home; but being seized in his flight, together

gether with the stolen goods, I have brought him here to my superior, and claim his approbation of my exertions."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the magistrate, highly incensed. He then stated the name and quality of the youth, and how lately he had left his own district; inquiring at the same time who the female might be that dared to make such an accusation.

When the village officer understood the rank of Teihchungyu, he began to quake with fear, and to make excuses. "It was not my doing, sir," said he; "it rests entirely with the old man who made the accusation, and with the woman who confirmed it."

The Chehëen borrowed an apartment close by, and invited the youth to sit down with him, inquiring by what strange chance he had met with this adventure? Teihchungyu related his rencontre with the young man and the girl at the wood-side, upon which the magistrate exclaimed, "It is a great pity that we do not know the young man's name!"

"I happen fortunately to have heard it," said Teihchungyu; "he is the son of the old man's daughter, and his name is Seuenyin."

Letaekoong and the girl were immediately summoned, and received a lecture from the magistrate, who exclaimed, "You old villain! was it not bad enough in one so aged as you are, and so near his end, to take a young girl like this into your family; but after carelessly

lessly letting her escape, what punishment do you expect for charging an innocent traveller with carrying her off?"

"Alas! sir," replied the old man, "it was no fault of mine. When this woman was missed, they were found in company, and the crowd apprehended them both, and brought them to the village; she herself too gave her testimony to it; and I should not be blamed for what has happened."

"You old wretch!" rejoined the Chehëen, "it was your daughter's son Seuenyin that kept up a communication with this woman, and took occasion to carry her off yesterday. They happened, luckily for you, to meet with this young gentleman, who apprehended the girl and brought her back. Is this your gratitude, then, to return evil for good?"

When he heard the name of Seuenyin, the old man started. "So," exclaimed he, "was it the young thief himself that ran off with her? This was his object in coming to cajole me with his smooth speeches!" Then bending several times to the ground, he added, "There is no need of farther proof, sir;—you are perfectly right."

The magistrate would have issued a warrant for the young man's apprehension; but Letaekoong prostrated himself, and while he acknowledged that it was nothing more than the offence deserved, pleaded the death of the culprit's father, and the necessity of his assistance

to his widowed mother's maintenance, as a reason for letting him off; adding that, for his own part, he would never see him again.

The Chehëen would next have punished the female prisoner by the application of the thumbikins;* and here the old man could venture to say nothing. But Teihchungyu interceded for her, observing that she appeared to constitute the old fellow's very existence;† and as the other, who was fully as guilty, had been excused, she too perhaps might be pardoned. "She has behaved so ill," said the magistrate, "and afforded so bad an example, that if I were to give her fingers a good squeeze there would be no harm in it; but having the luck to meet with this young gentleman for her intercessor, she may be released without punishment."

Both the old man and the girl now humbled themselves before the Chehëen in token of gratitude, and took their departure; after which the village officer came in to pay his respects, and having received a lecture from the magistrate, was finally dismissed. The Chehëen then turned to Teihchungyu and addressed him thus: "I would gladly have detained you yesterday, sir, to dine with me; but the just causes of dislike which you had against me, and your anxiety to proceed on your journey, made me backward to propose it. I may consider the accidental detention which you have

* Vide *ante*, page 122 note.

† *Singming*, literally $\Xi\omega\eta$ καὶ $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$.

have experienced from these people as fortunate for myself, since it gives me an opportunity of inviting you to partake of an entertainment. You may, perhaps, have no objection to forget the past in a little good-fellowship."

"I must own," replied Teihchungyu, "that the recollection of the past made me unwilling to defer my departure yesterday; but the eminent services and kindness which I have experienced to-day at your worship's hands, make me so willing to accept your invitation, that you would now find it more difficult to get rid of, than to detain me."

The other was delighted to hear this, and forthwith ordered an entertainment to be laid out where they were; * after which he went over to pay his respects to the superior magistrate, and then returned to dine with Teihchungyu.

Human events in quick vicissitude
Succeed each other; but true friendship's ties
Gain strength from time! Ask ye why sovereign heav'n
Thus vexes mortals?—'Tis to try their hearts,
Like metal in the fiery crucible.

They had once before drank together; but it was on the last occasion a mere affair of ceremony, altogether devoid of the intimacy of friendship; now, however,
P 2 they

* Every Chinese town abounds in taverns and eating-houses, whence a dinner may be had at a short notice. An invitation to dinner is called an invitation to wine. One of their red tickets is now lying before the translator, to this effect: "At six o'clock on the 7th of the 9th moon I shall prepare wine, and await the illumination of your presence."

they had become such good friends, that each pledged the other with mutual good-will; and when the wine had made them frank and communicative, the conversation, among other subjects, turned upon Shueypingsin. The Chehëen repeated his exhortations in favour of the match, to which Teihchungyu replied thus: "It is not right to dissemble between friends, and therefore I will not deceive you. When I first beheld the admirable deportment and exquisite beauty of Shueypingsin in your worship's hall, I could not help feeling touched by them, in spite of the unpleasant circumstances of the occasion; and after my retreat to the priest's residence, although the meeting had been so transient, and was so unlikely to be repeated, I could not altogether get her out of my mind. When I subsequently became ill, and my sickness had reduced me to extremity, she removed me to her house, and restored me to health, displaying a degree of kindness and attention which almost surpassed that of the nearest kindred. At the same time her conduct was so guarded and reserved, that it left no room for any sentiments except those of the deepest gratitude. I have accordingly refrained from indulging any selfish schemes whatever in relation to my benefactress. The mention of marriage makes me feel as if some act of profanation were suggested against a superior being. Your worship's first proposal really inspired me with this idea; it was no affectation of scruple on my part to attract admiration."

The

The Chehëen sighed. "Admitting, as you say," replied he, "that she should be treated like some superior being, there appears to myself no reason why her future life should be passed in singleness. If they think of marriage on her father's return, and after losing this chance of obtaining yourself, seek some other match, such an event would appear a much greater act of profanation than the other. Suited as you are to one another by your superior qualities, and bound together by essential services mutually rendered, it would be a dereliction of duty on my part to be aware of the truth, and not do my best to perfect the union."

"You view it in a very different light from myself, sir," said the youth: "I cannot get over my scruples." The friends had now kept up their meeting until each felt that he had drank enough; they accordingly stopped, and agreed it was best to pass the night at their lodging.

Early on the following day, as the magistrate had business at his office, and Teihchungyu was anxious to proceed on his journey, they prepared to separate without loss of time. On the eve of departure, the former took out twelve täels of silver,* and presented them

* In a country where they have no paper-money—where gold is not used as a circulating medium—and where silver, instead of being coined, is exchanged on all occasions by weight—the ordinary intercourse between buyers and sellers is attended with some inconvenience; and it is impossible for a traveller to take much money about with him. The custom of presenting money to friends is therefore the result of necessity.

them to his friend. "I have one word more of exhortation to add," said he; and when the youth begged him to speak out, he continued: "Although to one like yourself, mere literary reputation would not be much real addition, still letters should not be neglected. Instead of passing your time in unprofitable rambling, how much better would it be to acquire fame by gleaning in the field of learning." Teihchungyu thanked him cordially for his good advice, and they parted.

At first, as water is to burning coal
Oppos'd, they stood; but now united were
Most intimately. When his heart had once
Turn'd the right way, he understood the path
Of reason.

As he proceeded on his journey, Teihchungyu could not help contrasting the present behaviour of the magistrate with his former conduct, and making reflections thereon. His thoughts then turned to Shueyping-sin. "This maiden," said he to himself, "delicate as the spring leaflet of the willow, and beautiful as the tints of the flower Haetāng,* surpasses what is related of the charms of Setsze and Maoutseang.† Then the admirable address with which she thrice discomfited Kwo-ketsu with such mortifying circumstances, was never surpassed by the most prudent of heroes‡ with all his wisdom.

Taken

* *Pyrus Japonica*.

† The first of these was a celebrated beauty, and queen of one of the petty states during the civil wars: the second was another beauty in history.

‡ Tchenping, the Chinese Ulysses, who, during the civil wars, assisted one of the contending states with his stratagems.

Taken as she was by surprise, and hurried away with violence, she yet retained her presence of mind, and when brought before the Chehëen could plead her own cause with such extraordinary courage and address!" He in like manner went over all that she had done for himself, not forgetting the kind care and foresight she evinced in despatching her servant with a supply for his journey, when the offensive behaviour of her uncle had driven him from the house—on an occasion, too, when any other person would have taken umbrage at his abrupt departure. "Among the greatest beauties of history," thought he to himself, "were Setsze and Wunkeun,* but their conduct served to debase their charms;—while on the other hand Mengkwong and Wooyen,† who were celebrated for their virtue, were not equally famous on the score of beauty. Shueypingsin, who combines every excellence in her own person, calls for the best exertions of some worthy person to obtain her, and whoever should succeed in his pursuit would doubtless be the happiest of mortals. Alas, for myself and my unhappy destiny! Living in the same age with her, suitable in years and every other respect, loving and valuing each other as we do, how untoward has been the course of events! We met in adverse

* This has been mistaken, in France, for a man's name, by construing literally the characters that compose it, and styled the 'prince of letters.'

† The first is always quoted as the pattern of wives: history says of the second, that 'her features were ugly without a parallel.'

adverse circumstances, in public conversed together without any previous intervention of friends, and sat at the same entertainment, contrary to all the rules of established custom. Thus, while we formed for each other the most generous of friendships, the possibility of a more intimate union became remoter than ever; for should we think of marriage now, our past actions would avail nothing to save our character. Did the proposal emanate from myself, I should not only become the object of general reproach, but Shueypingsin herself would despise me! Alas! my resolution is made up. We must preserve our present relation to each other, if we would avoid shame and repentance."

—"But this maiden," continued he to himself, "is not only excellent as regards her own conduct: the advice she gave me relating to my present pursuits is well worthy of consideration. She counselled me to continue my father's line of life, instead of wandering forth alone and independent to the limits of the empire. This indeed is a prescription which exactly suits my complaint: for if, instead of doing myself some credit by attainments in letters, I pass my whole time in a restless search of adventure, men will give me the character of an unsettled vagabond, until Shueypingsin herself joins in the scorn against me! I will hasten home, and prepare for the next general examination of graduates; I may perchance have the good fortune to realize the hopes of my family: and hereafter, whether
I obtain

I obtain office or not, I shall be more at liberty to chuse my course of life. How much better than this unsettled and contentious existence !” His resolution thus formed, Teihchungyu took the nearest road towards his home.

Her words were past—but yet upon his ear
Soft accents linger’d, and each transient scene
Gone by, still serv’d to agitate his breast :
Devotedness like his exists in semblance,
But none in deep degree.

When Shueypingsin, after waiting for some time, found that the domestic whom she had despatched did not return, she began to fear lest some mischief had befallen him ; and was already in a state of painful suspense, when towards the close of day her steward appeared, and having explained the causes of his delay, made a verbal report of his proceedings, and of the message with which he had been charged by Teihchungyu. She listened in silence, and when she had dismissed the servant, soliloquized thus : “ The timely succour which he lent me has spirited up against him some mortal enemies, and exposed him to the worst dangers : but I have happily sent him away safe at last, and may now set my heart at rest on *his* account !—Let me not forget, however, that Kwoketsu is still combined with my uncle for mischief : they will not forget what has passed, and it will require all my attention to counteract their plots.”

Fortunately for her, the haughty and unceremonious
departure

departure of Teihchungyu had so annoyed her uncle, that he did not venture to pay her another visit for some days. One morning, however, he came over in high glee to see the young lady. "Niece," said he, "have you heard the strange news?" She pleaded the retired life of a female, in her situation, as a sufficient reason for being ignorant of what was passing abroad. "Well then," continued her uncle, "you must know that when I advised you to marry Teihchungyu, I had the best opinion of his character; but you were fortunately steady in refusing a hasty assent. Your happiness might otherwise have been ruined for life! Can you guess what sort of person he has proved himself to be?"

"I know nothing of his birth and family," replied the young lady; "but from what I have observed of his conduct, it would plainly appear that he is a young man of extraordinary virtue."

"Of extraordinary virtue indeed!" exclaimed the other impatiently; "you used to have a great share of penetration once, niece; what has become of it on this occasion?"

"In what way has he belied his former character?" inquired Shueypingsin.

"Why, he is nothing better than a practised seducer," replied her uncle; "I know not what schemes he might have had in view when he pretended sickness, and gained a lodging in this house; but you may consider

sider it the height of good luck on your part that he was obliged, by the sound rating I gave him, to desist, and took his departure in an affected passion. The earthen pitcher, however, gets broken at last, and no sooner did he reach the neighbouring village than he betrayed himself."

"Pray what was it he did to betray himself?" asked the young lady.

"A person of some wealth in that neighbourhood," replied he, "has a young mistress, of whom he is extremely fond; but whom this youth, by some unknown device, contrived to seduce away and carry off: unluckily for him that person happens to maintain a great number of idle retainers, who presently gave chase in all directions, and very soon overtook the fugitives. They first of all beat him until he was half dead,* and then carried him before the village officer. Now if he had possessed any discretion, and humbled himself before the man in authority, he might possibly have been let off after a gentle correction—though I will not answer for even that; but, strange to say, he had the extreme folly, although in this unhappy predicament, to put on a blustering air and provoke the officer, who became so enraged that he has carried him before his superior. Every one declares that there is no doubt of

* The old gentleman's amplification is evident: he is one of those who 'de magnis majora loquuntur.'

of his guilt, and he must be banished* beyond the frontier."

"Where did you hear all this, uncle?" inquired Shueypingsin.

"When his worship the Chehëen," replied Shueyun, "went to visit the Taoutae on his birth-day, his followers learned these particulars, which were afterwards transmitted to myself."

"Well," said his niece, smiling composedly, "let Teihchungyu be what you say he is,—it concerns myself no more than if the favourite disciple† of Confucius had really been a murderer."

"I know it does not concern you," exclaimed he; "but this event proves how very difficult it is to be sure of a person's character on a short acquaintance, and that, to avoid the chance of being deceived, one's knowledge must be better founded than on a casual meeting."

"In a matter with which I have so little concern," observed Shueypingsin, "there is not much occasion to argue the point; but what you have been pleased to say seems intended to ridicule my want of penetration, in forming a wrong opinion of this young man. Did it refer

* There are two kinds of exile, of which the principal is banishment into Tartary, and condemnation to slavery, or military service—the other is temporary exile to the distance of 300 leagues from the culprit's home.

† Named Tsengsen—allusion to a passage in one of their classics.

refer to any person but himself, I should not think it worth while to say a word in reply ; but after the mutual services we have rendered each other, the slur you throw upon his character implies that our acquaintance was dishonest, and slanders his reputation equally with my own : I have therefore a good reason for repelling it."

" I do not know," cried her uncle, " whether to be most angry or amused by what you say. I never had any cause of enmity towards this young man ; what should make me slander him, then ? He happens to be a libertine, and entices away a young woman : you live quietly at home, and know nothing about it ; but the people near the magistrate's office report it to me. Why blame me on *their* account ? If you chuse to say that you mistook his character, and that this was a thing you could not help, I can understand you :—but if you attempt to maintain that he really is not guilty, I suspect all the water in the yellow river will never wash him clean from the imputation."

" If I think it worth while to maintain any thing," replied Shueypingsin, " it will be that he is not what you call him, and that the whole is the slanderous invention of worthless people. You may then learn that I was not deceived in my good opinion : any other point I do not think it necessary to argue."

" My good niece, you are very obstinate," said Shueyun : " that he is guilty has been proved by a
number

number of witnesses ; what is there for *you* to say on the subject ?”

“ You assert that it has been proved by witnesses,” answered she, “ and until we hear something authentic on the subject, I will not debate the point with you ; but, judging from reason and principle, I must still maintain that this young man cannot be what you say : and though such a report may have gone abroad, admitting that it is not a fabrication altogether, there must yet be something more in it than has come to light—for should he really prove to be guilty of the charge, I will engage to forfeit both my eyes to you.”

“ Why, the woman he carried off has been apprehended in his company,” exclaimed Shueyun, “ and taken before the village officer, who transferred them both to his superior. They are now on trial : there can be no fabrication in *this*. Your attempt to vindicate his character after matters have reached this point, only proves that you are blinded by excess of love.”

“ It is vain attempting to persuade you at present, uncle,” said the young lady ; “ but do not be too positive. If you will only inquire a little farther, you may arrive at the real truth.”

“ Inquire farther or not,” replied he, “ Teihchungyu is nothing better than a seducer. Since you are obstinate, however, and wish me to make farther inquiries, there is no harm in so doing, it is only the loss of a few hours—let that rest : but as you argue from reason and principle

principle that he cannot be guilty, pray let me hear how you attain to that conclusion?"

"These two words, reason and principle," said his niece, "are of a mysterious nature. Those to whom they have been revealed can comprehend them; but they will still remain unintelligible to all others. It is very difficult to explain them to people who possess neither reason nor principle;*—but as you have asked me, I must speak out. Now reason has taught me to distinguish between virtuous and vicious conduct, and that all those whose actions and conversation are regulated by virtue, must be incapable of the reverse. I have observed Teihchungyu, from the public hall of justice to the private dwelling,—that no action or word was contrary to virtue and propriety. Unless endowed with the natural gift of right reason, he could not have behaved thus; and such being the case, to say that he can be guilty of a charge like this is absurd and impossible. I distinguish likewise between selfish and disinterested principle, and judge that truly generous characters are incapable of selfish conduct. From my first meeting with this young man until his final departure, I saw that his exertions to rescue me were perfectly disinterested, and in favour of a mere stranger. Unless the principles of his conduct were the very opposite of selfish, he could not have acted thus; and such being the case, to pretend that he can be a selfish seducer is altogether

* This was the unkindest cut of all.

gether impossible and absurd. My opinion of him, being well grounded, is positive, and the fear of death should not make me change it. But if what you charge against him were true, it would prove that nature * had been a blunderer in the constitution of the human race ; it would imply that all the maxims of the sages were founded in error, and must accordingly be false. The popular maxim prefers the evidence of sight to that of hearing ;—do not be in such a hurry to laugh at me, but go and inquire once more. Should you really be able to establish all that has been alleged against this young man, it will not be too late for your triumph ; but until that be done, it is unfair to judge of such a person by the opinions of worthless people.”

“ Well,” said her uncle laughing, “ if you chuse to pursue a subject which should be so unpleasant to you, I will go and make further inquiry, and then hear what more you have to say.”

“ Uncle,” replied the young lady with a smile, “ I hope you will not fail to return, even though the inquiry turn out unlucky for yourself.”

As Shueyun took his departure, he could not help exclaiming to himself, “ How is it that this young girl possesses such sense and penetration ! What, if all I have heard should be really false ?—But let me go straight to the magistrate’s and ascertain.”

On

* *T’hëen te seng jîn*, literally, ‘ heaven and earth in the production of mankind.’

On his arrival there, he saw one of the people attached to the office, and learned from him that a young man had really been apprehended in company with the woman who ran away—but as this account was confused by the addition, that the young man so apprehended was not the person that had enticed her away, Shueyun interrogated a lad who was attached to the magistrate's person. He then learned the whole truth, and, struck with astonishment, ejaculated to himself, "This girl without joking is a most extraordinary person! What I believed to be most true, she had the ready hardihood to maintain was decidedly false, and offered to forfeit her eyes in the event of being mistaken. At my departure, too, she hinted her suspicion that I should not like to return, when the unpleasant truth was known.—How I triumphed over her at first! I truly have not the face* to go back to her just now!" After some hesitation, "Let me go," thought he to himself, "and consult with Kwoketsu; something or other may yet turn up."

He proceeded straight to his son-in-law, and reported every circumstance as it occurred. "Sir," said the other, "do not concern yourself so much about the truth or falsehood of this affair. To achieve any thing on such an occasion as this, a little invention

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* *Mo lien tsuy*: the Chinese expression is literally our's in this place.

is indispensable, and though the report be *false*, we must speak and act just as if it were *true*. This Teihchungyu has done enough, to admit of our adding a little more, and we may give a colouring to the circumstances, without the absolute imputation of lying."

"Who minds lying?" cried Shueyun,—“not I! But unfortunately there are no lies for us to tell on this occasion.”*

"Oh," said the other, "if that is all, I can easily accommodate you. What need of more than a few verses to lampoon him, which you may declare came from some person unknown. These you may shew to your niece; and let there be ever so many witnesses of the real truth, who shall disprove it?"

"A very good scheme," observed Shueyun,—“but who is to make the verses?"

"Who else but myself," replied his son-in-law,—“the accomplished scholar and man of genius, Kwoketsu!"

"If you will undertake the task, so much the better," said the other, "but as soon as they are composed, pray write them out for me."

"There is not much in their composition," observed Kwoketsu, "and I will repeat them to you; but

* It may be perceived, that the characters of these two worthies are in strict keeping throughout.

but as to the writing, I will not answer for being able to do that myself."

"Let us hear them first," said Shueyun; "we may put them on paper afterwards."

The other now proceeded to rehearse the verses,* and Shueyun clapped his hands with delight. "Very good indeed!" cried he, "very good! I am only afraid that the last two lines may betray too much,† and excite a suspicion of yourself being the author;—better omit them."

"Let them suspect what they please!" said Kwoketsu, "Those two lines are of great consequence, and must not be omitted."

"Very well," answered the other,— "but this must be written out before I can shew it to her."

"That is easily done," said the young man, so calling a domestic of the family who could write, he dictated the lines, and when they were finished, presented them to Shueyun. "If you will shew her this paper, sir, it may serve to break down her delicate pride a little. Should she consent

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* The lines themselves, twenty-eight in number, are intended by the author to be very stupid and miserable, as proceeding from so illiterate a person. Their whole point consists in their abusiveness, and in the recurrence of the same word or character at the end of every line, which it was found impossible to preserve in English; and as many of them were absolutely untranslatable from their shocking grossness, it was judged best to omit them altogether.

* They convey a hint that the young lady should marry Kwoketsu.

to have me, then well ; but if she gives herself any fine airs, the new imperial commissioner is already appointed, and happens to be a pupil of my father's. I shall court her no more myself, but persuade the commissioner to take upon himself the absolute disposal of her person, and on the ground of her father having no son to succeed him, authorize me to marry her at her own house, instead of bringing her home to mine. We will then see what she can do to escape me!"

Shueyun by no means relished this scheme. " If you do that," observed he with alarm, " the whole property must become your own, and our family estate will be lapsed for ever. Let me beg you to espouse her in the usual manner."

The other could not help laughing at his fright. " You take me too strictly at my word. My only object in adopting this plan is to get possession of her person—that being secured, I shall bring her home. Think you my family is so miserably poor, that we must be coveting the property of your's, or wishing to become their heirs ?"

Shueyun was delighted. " It is just what I should have expected from you," cried he ; " but wait while I go and shew her these lines ; if she is offended, I will mention the commissioner's visit and its consequences. There is little fear of her persevering after that."

" Lose

"Lose no time," exclaimed Kwoketsu with impatience.—"I wait here for good news!"

Shueyun took his departure with the verses to call upon his niece—but to see her virtue triumphant over every trial, as pure gold survives its fiery test, the reader must proceed to the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

“ BY HER APPEAL TO THE EMPEROR, SHUEYPINGSIN
TERRIFIES THE COMMISSIONER.”

When peals the thunder in the echoing void,
Then quake the hollow-hearted ! Th' innocent
Alone unscar'd may listen—while the knave,
Full fraught with memory of darkest deeds,
Expects each bolt will on his head descend !
How gladly would he close the long account
Of evil render'd—how unwillingly
Augment it by an item !

ON reaching the house of his niece with the verses invented by Kwoketsu, Shueyun addressed the young lady thus : “ I wish now that I had not gone to inquire farther concerning that young man, for his guilt might still have remained unknown to us ; but you insisted on my going, and the result is very unfavourable.” His niece begged to be informed, and he continued : “ Had I remained quiet, we should have heard the rumour of his being a seducer—still, however, it was a mere rumour ; but now such clear and decided proof has been afforded of his guilt, that it not only disgraces himself, but involves us too, with whom he lately lodged.”

“ What is the proof ? ” inquired Shueypingsin.

“ On my arrival at the magistrate's,” replied he, “ I found that some busy person had already made the
guilt

guilt of Teihchungyu the subject of a satirical poem, and pasted it up on every wall. Thinking that you might not believe me, I pulled down one of these, and brought it with me, that you might learn what sort of character he really is." So saying he presented her with the paper; which she had no sooner looked over, than, to his surprise, she began to laugh excessively.

"Uncle," said the young lady, "I congratulate you! How lately have you taken to your studies, to be able to indite such fine poetry as this?"

"Alas!" exclaimed he, "how should I attempt to deceive *you* on such a point, whatever I might do with others! When did you know me capable of making verses?"

"Well," answered his niece, "if you were not the author of these verses, I am quite sure that they proceeded from the masterly pencil of Kwoketsu."

"Do not be so unjust," cried he, beginning to rave and stamp in despair; "whatever people may say, he has not a bit more learning than your uncle! *His* masterly pencil! why he cannot so much as write: do not persist in calling him the author."

"He may not be able to *write*," said the young lady, "but he may *dictate* for all that."

"But he has no quarrel with this young man," interrupted her uncle, "that should induce him to take the trouble of composing such a satire."

"That may possibly be true," replied she, "still he is well

well aware that there *is* such a person as Teihchungyu ; while every body else in the neighbourhood is unacquainted with, and would hardly, therefore, think of lampooning him. The deception is too gross. I may be a weak and silly girl, but such a low and vulgar production as this can make no impression on me ; let me advise the author, then, to waste no more pains."

Her tone was so decided that Shueyun dared not press her farther on that subject. " We will let that rest," said he ;—" but I have something yet to tell you, which demands your serious consideration." Being requested to explain himself, he continued : " It is simply this ; Kwoketsu cannot give you up, although the want of power on the part of the local authorities has induced him to defer his pursuit ; yesterday, however, he learned that the newly appointed imperial commissioner is a favourite pupil of his father the minister, and only waits his arrival in order to obtain his interference. His plan is to come and marry you in your own house.* Now your father being an exile on the frontier, without any means of communication, and I myself

* This mode of espousal is called *jöchuy*, and occurs when a rich man, having only daughters, adopts a son-in-law to succeed to his property. " The bridegroom, who instead of taking home the bride to his own house, lives with her at the house of her parents, by so doing deviates from the established forms of espousal ; but having been once so received as a son-in-law, the law protects him in the right which he has acquired, of either remaining there with his wife, or taking her away with him to a separate establishment."—STAUNTON'S *Penal Code*. Book III. sect. 104, *Note*.

myself a person of no official rank or influence, what can a young girl like yourself do to oppose his designs?"

"The imperial commissioner," replied his niece, "is the delegate of his majesty for the general investigation and redressal of wrongs. Should he countenance a forced marriage out of blind devotion to his ancient tutor, and violate the sanctity of the marriage relation, he will become a mere instrument of injustice, instead of the emperor's delegate for the promotion of good government. But who shall venture to incur the stern rigour of the penal laws? Set your heart at rest, uncle—as for myself, I have no apprehensions.

"It is very well for you to talk in that way to *me*," said he, laughing; "but I suspect that when you come before the commissioner, the weight of his authority, and the prospect of near punishment, will give you real cause of fear."

"The violation of the laws to evil and cruel purposes," replied Shueypingsin, "may make the frail humanity of a worthy and exalted character tremble; but such natural feelings will never compel it to descend from its moral elevation: for being governed by a fixed principle of rectitude, the presence* of the emperor himself,

* Literally "the sight of the emperor himself." This is precisely "Justum et tenacem propositi virum—non *vultus instantis tyranni* mente quatit solidâ." The above is the language of the Confucians, or stoics, who are in fact the only sect in China with any pretensions to morality. The Budhists combine superstition with depravity;—and the Taousze are mere cheats and jugglers.

self, much less his delegate, will never force such a character to degrade itself. Why then permit your apprehensions of these worthless people's power and influence to govern your conduct?"

"Power and influence," said her uncle, "are what the greatest persons of past and present times have not been able to shake off; why then couple them with the worthless only? I am ready to acknowledge myself one of the worthless order, who are subject to their sway; but suspect, at the same time, that I seek my real advantage thereby."

"Well," observed she smiling, "if that be the case, let me ask what great advantage you have ever derived from them?"

"I see you are disposed to laugh at me," said he; "but though my devotion through life to persons of power and influence may not have advanced me, I have certainly never suffered by such a course. I am only afraid that the contempt which you profess for them will lead you into trouble; and when the time arrives you must not say that I gave you no warning."

To this his niece replied, "The proverb says well, 'the winter insect must not talk of summer:—the *ephemeris** never knows spring and autumn.' We are all best acquainted with the nature of our own situations. Let me beg you, uncle, to mind your own affairs: your niece knows that there are such things as propriety, virtue,

* *Hoeykoo*.

virtue, reputation, and self-government. In comparison with these, happiness and misery are indifferent to her. Pray then give yourself no uncalled-for anxiety on my account."

Shueyun now perceived that all his attempts to persuade her were vain, so assuming an air of well-intentioned honesty, he told his niece, that the pains he had taken to convince her were for her good, and he grieved much that she would not listen to him. With that he left her; but on his way out could not help soliloquizing thus: "She neither credits my attempts to defame this youth, nor fears any threats regarding the commissioner;—truly there seems to be no remedy! Yet my brother, who is in exile, may remain there for any length of time; and shall the whole family property stay quietly in the possession of this young girl? If the commissioner is coming, I must stir up Kwoketsu to proceed to extremities, and when all parties are embroiled by my suggestions, I may take occasion to benefit myself."

With this resolution he proceeded straight to Kwoketsu, whom he informed of what had passed between his niece and himself; and then asked the other if he did not think she was very provoking. Kwoketsu was much enraged. "Well," cried he, "let her talk in this style for the present. Wait till the commissioner arrives, and when I have sent in my memorial, we will see whether he chuses to support me, the son of a minister

minister of state—or your niece, the daughter of a banished member of the military tribunal.”

“ Could you only forget her,” replied Shueyun, “ we might avoid these unpleasant discussions with my niece, and the humiliation we are obliged to suffer from her ; but if you cannot give her up, our only course is to wait for the commissioner. We will seize on her with a strong hand, and secure her beyond the chance of escape : then let her resort to all her stratagems, she can. But submit at last ; but if we go on debating the point with her, think you she will ever* ‘ descend from her high horse ’ ? ”

Kwoketsu assented, and their conference being thus ended, they parted. After the lapse of a couple of months, the new commissioner was said to be approaching. Kwoketsu hurried out to a great distance on the road to meet him, and when they had reached his residence, and burnt incense to the emperor, the great man’s arrival was welcomed by him with rich gifts.

The first press of business being over, Kwoketsu prepared an entertainment, and invited the commissioner. The latter could not but accept it from the son of his tutor and superior, and when they had drank a certain quantity of wine, the great man, moved by the attentions of his host, said to him, “ On my first arrival, it has been out of my power to make any return for your kindness : but should you have any wish

which

* Literal.

which I can gratify, I shall of course be glad to accede to it."

"Sir," replied the other, "the majesty of your public office, which inspires all under your authority with awe, would deter me from offering any thing private to your notice; but there is a matter which touches me nearly, in which I would beg your lordship to arbitrate and govern."

"What may it be," inquired the commissioner, "that touches you so nearly?"

"My father," said the young man, "has been so engrossed by public business as to be unable to pay due attention to his family, and I have as yet never proceeded beyond the inferior connexion, nor been able to espouse a rightful wife."*

"That is strange!" exclaimed his friend with surprise. "Did not I hear that you had sent the marriage presents, and were regularly contracted?"

"I did no more than send the presents," replied the other, "and the lady has since changed her mind."

The commissioner smiled. "Why, this is still more extraordinary! With your father's elevated dignity, and your own youth and flourishing prospects, who is there but would gladly tie the silken net with you?—Who may this lady be?"

"The

* He wishes to pretend that his spouse is only a handmaid, of whom a man may have as many as he pleases, subordinate to the *Tse*, or rightful wife, of whom he can only have one—his equal in rank, and espoused with the proper forms.

"The daughter of Shueykeuyih, member of the military tribunal," answered Kwoketsu.

"But this Shueykeuyih is in exile," observed his friend;—"who is it that presides in his family during his absence, and sanctions this breach of the contract?"

"The mother is dead," replied the young man, "and there is none but the daughter herself to preside in the family."

"But how should a young girl like her presume to change her mind?" said the commissioner; "I suppose she was not aware of the contract."

"Allowing her to be ignorant of the first proposal," answered the other, "I still engaged a regular negotiator of the match, observed the six ceremonials,* and sent the presents, which were all accepted; could she be ignorant after this?—but when it came to the point she made a thousand objections, and evaded the match in a multitude of ways."

"That being the case," observed his friend, "why did you neglect to call in the authority of the two local magistrates?"

"I did engage their assistance," replied he, "but she thought very lightly of them, and treated them with contempt and indifference. I have, therefore, no resource but to intreat you to assume your irresistible

* For the six ceremonials see Morrison's Dictionary, page 692. These are in practice now reduced to three,—making the proposal,—sending the presents,—and carrying the bride home.

tible authority, and tame for me the delicate pride of this high-bred lady. When I have perfected this desirable union, my gratitude will not be small—and she can scarcely venture to offer any opposition.”

“It is a fine match,” said the commissioner, “and I consider it my duty to assist you; but I fear the negotiators might not have been sufficiently respectable, or the presents not clearly accepted; in case you proceeded to carry her home irregularly, it were very unadvised.”

To this Kwoketsu replied, “The Chehëen was negociator on the occasion, and the contract was made by him in person. Her father being in exile, Shueyun, her uncle, received the marriage presents; all these circumstances are universally known—how then shall she dare to provoke your lordship by her mad obstinacy?”

“That being the case,” observed the commissioner, “there is nothing to be said. To-morrow I will prepare an order, authorizing you to carry her home as your wife.”

“But she may refuse to enter the chair,” said the other, “or throw some other difficulties in the way; let me beg you to authorize my espousing her at her own house; she can hardly refuse me then.” The commissioner nodded assent, and when they had finished their wine in high mirth, they separated.

In a day or two the following paper was addressed to the Chehëen.

“ The commissioner’s order. Marriage, being the source of all the human relations, and possessing the greatest influence on the public morals, should not be delayed beyond the fit period. It is stated that Kwoketsu, son of the minister, has been long contracted to the daughter of Shueykeuyih, member of the military tribunal. The Chehëen, it appears, was engaged as negociator, and by him the six ceremonies were duly observed. These preliminary rites being fulfilled, it is proper to conclude the marriage forthwith. But as the father of the bride is absent, let her be espoused at her own house. I request the Chehëen to convey my instructions to both parties; let them chuse a fortunate day without loss of time, and proceed to conclude the joyful rites. Delay not the favourable period, to the detriment of so auspicious a union. A month is limited for the completion of the nuptials, and let none of the parties be dilatory, at their peril.”

When the Chehëen received this and considered it attentively, he was aware that it must be the work of Kwoketsu, relying on the commissioner’s connexion with his father. That magistrate would at first have presented a public address, but feared the young man’s resentment—he would then have held his peace altogether, but here again he apprehended that the commissioner, in treating Shueypingsin too lightly, might get himself into trouble, and then reproach him for

for not giving him warning. He accordingly wrote a private note to the following effect :

“ I certainly acted as negociator in proposing this match ; but it was at the desire of Kwoketsu and the young lady’s uncle Shueyun, in opposition to the wishes of the young lady herself. It has therefore remained unconcluded. I have received your lordship’s directions, and it is my duty to respect them ; but considering the determined resolution of Shueypingsin to remain single, and the address with which she has constantly eluded marriage, I am fearful lest, in receiving the order, she might assume the pride of her rank, and wound your lordship’s dignity by her refusal. I therefore make this representation of the truth, and wait for farther commands.”

“ What !” exclaimed the great man in a rage, “ am not I, with the authority of imperial commissioner, a match for this young girl ?” He accordingly issued a second order.

“ The Commissioner again sends instructions to the Chehëen. If, according to his statement, Shueypingsin were averse from the match, for whom did that magistrate act as negociator, and settle the contract ? Does he not contradict himself ? He ought to have communicated my order instantly to Shueypingsin, who, being the daughter of an officer in disgrace, could hardly presume to offer any opposition. Should she prove disobedient, let her be brought before my

tribunal, that I may interrogate and punish her. Obey this mandate."

On observing the peremptory strain in which this second paper was worded, the Chehëen judged that he could no longer consider the rights of the question, but must proceed to obey his orders. He first communicated the commissioner's instructions to Kwoketsu,—who of course very readily assented,—and then went on to the residence of Shueypingsin. He left his chair at the door, and walked into the great hall, desiring a servant to inform the young lady that he had come on business from the commissioner, and wished to speak with her.

Shueypingsin, when she heard the message, became aware that they had executed their threatened intention, and walked out, attended by two female slaves, towards the back of the hall, where she took her station behind a hanging screen. The magistrate, being informed that the young lady waited his instructions within, addressed himself in the direction of the screen: "The business on which I come, young lady, is no other than the marriage which Kwoketsu wishes to conclude with you. He employed me as negociator, but your unwillingness has hitherto proved an obstacle. The newly arrived commissioner being a pupil of his father, Kwoketsu has engaged his authority to effect the match; and his lordship, not fully aware of the whole truth, has issued a paper, requiring me to transmit his

his directions to both parties, who are to chuse a fortunate day, and complete the nuptials as a public example. Thus compelled, I have communicated the order to Kwoketsu, who received it very joyfully; and now convey the same to yourself, young lady, begging that you will obey his lordship and make early preparations."

To this Shueypingsin replied from within the screen, "It does not befit me to decline the marriage; but without my father's authority I am unwilling to make choice of a husband, and therefore trust your worship will represent my case."

"I stated the circumstance to his lordship on receiving the order," said the magistrate, "but he surprised me by an answer in which I myself was severely rated, and the language was so peremptory that I could only transmit his commands. Whether you resolve to obey or not, it should be done with deliberation—as for myself, I do not pretend to control you."

On her requesting to see the two papers, the magistrate desired his clerk to hand them to the female attendants; and when the young lady had read them attentively, she replied, "My unwillingness to marry Kwoketsu is not a matter of choice, for were I to take it upon myself to wed during my father's exile, and he found fault with me on his return, there would remain no excuse for my conduct. These mandates of the com-

missioner are so absolute, that it is impossible, especially for a helpless girl like myself, to dispute them,—and I can hardly be charged with following my own inclinations on the occasion. But yet, should they be returned to his lordship on the conclusion of the marriage, and he himself be recalled to court, no proofs will remain in my own justification. May I request your worship, therefore, to obtain them for me. My father will then perceive that my present compliance proceeded from a necessary submission to authority, and not from any wish of my own to conclude the marriage.”

“ You are very provident, replied the magistrate,—“ I will address the commissioner, and procure his sanction to your retaining the two papers.”

The conversation thus ended, he rose and returned to his office. “ I have been trying,” thought the magistrate, “ to effect a match between this young woman and Teihchungyu ; but she, who a little while ago would not listen to the proposal of marrying his rival, is now quite ready with her consent, and asks only to retain the commissioner’s order !—I really cannot understand it. His power, then, has prevailed at last ! However, if *she* gives up the point there is nothing to be said, and I must address his lordship according to her desire.”

When he read the paper which the Chehëen presented, the commissioner laughed aloud. “ Why, they

they told me," exclaimed he, "that this young lady was very scrupulous—how happens it that her scruples vanish so suddenly at the sight of my order?" The following answer was accordingly returned.

"It is stated that Shueypingsin, in the absence of her father's authority, is unwilling to be responsible for the pending match, and begs to retain my order in her own justification. Her filial conduct is very praiseworthy. But the fragrant season must not be lost; let the marriage be speedily concluded, as an excellent example. The two previous orders may be retained in evidence."

The Chehëen went in person to deliver this to Shueypingsin, and, as he rose to depart, counselled her thus: "The matter now rests with the commissioner, and not with Kwoketsu: you cannot possibly alter your mind. It is incumbent on you to prepare yourself; and when Kwoketsu has chosen a fortunate day, I will come again to inform you."

"It is very true," replied the young lady, "that the matter now rests with the commissioner, and I cannot presume to change my mind—but I suspect that when his lordship has considered awhile, he may be disposed to change *his own* mind."

"He is the protégé of a minister of state," observed the magistrate, "and secure of his patron's zealous aid: what should induce *him* to change?"

"I do not pretend to answer for him," said Shueypingsin,

pingsin ; “ but should he really remain inflexible, it will be quite impossible for *me* to avoid the marriage, however much I may wish to escape it.”

The magistrate took his leave and proceeded to Kwoketsu, whom he called upon to select a fortunate day for the conclusion of the nuptials. That young man, on finding that Shueypingsin had consented, could not disguise the excess of his joy—he began immediately to prepare himself, and here we leave him for the present.

Say ye the peach blossoms are blown,* and ask
What stops the bridal?—Know the birds must pair
Or willingly, or never.—Swarms of fowl
Flit round the river-islet ; but none wed,
Save kind with kind.

The commissioner was not displeased to see the young lady yield to his authority, as it gave him an opportunity of obliging his patron's son. After the lapse of a few days he opened the gates of his tribunal for the reception of appeals, and his court was soon filled with some hundreds of persons, who crowded in with their memorials, and knelt down in the entrance way. The commissioner directed that their petitions should be received, and the parties themselves dismissed until a reply could be returned : upon which the crowd dispersed in a body, and there remained behind only a single person

* Here are allusions to two or three odes in the Sheeking. ‘ The season of peach blossoms ’ poetically means spring, or that of marriage : —‘ the river-islet birds ’ are figurative of persons about to be wedded.

person—a young woman, who still knelt immoveably in her place. The attendants of the court desired her rudely to depart; but she rose, and advancing a few steps forward, knelt down as before. “I have provoked his lordship,” cried she, “and do not wish to avoid death. I desire only to end my life here, as a public example, and in vindication of the dignity of the imperial commissioner.”

So saying, she took out a glittering poniard from her sleeve, and was going to stab herself on the spot; but the commissioner, seeing her from where he sat, called out in alarm to his attendants to prevent her. He then inquired who she was, and the nature of her complaint, desiring that she would not be rash, but state her griefs plainly, in order to their being redressed.

“The guilty person you see before you,” replied she, “is the daughter of the exiled Shueykeuyih, late member of the military tribunal. Only seventeen years of age, my mother long since dead, and my father in exile;—living in desolate and solitary seclusion, and mourning* my unhappy lot,—the idea of marriage was farthest from my thoughts. But the wicked Kwoketsu concerted a hundred schemes to get possession of my person, and by several villainous attempts, had nearly succeeded in conquering my unprotected weakness. He now takes advantage of his family influence to revive his wolfish schemes, and would cause the unsullied gem to

* Literally, ‘eating bitter herbs, and drinking my tears.’

to meet with disgrace. Weeping I reflect, that although my father be in exile, he is of elevated rank; and though I myself be an insignificant individual, my cause is that of all secluded females. It is a case in which the established rites and the cause of morality are deeply concerned. How then shall I, without my father's consent on the one hand, and without the intervention of negociators on the other, so far lose myself, as to bury my reputation through a dread of unjust power! The late violence of Kwoketsu, though troublesome, was but the attempt of some petty robber, against whom precautions might avail: but he has now abused the authority of the commissioner, who is delegated by the imperial bounty, and procured a public order, by which the established rites and the cause of morality are treated with contempt and outrage. The dread of so much power deprived me of all courage and presence of mind. I knew that if I attempted to preserve my honour, my family and myself must fall victims to unjust influence—but to die once is nothing in comparison with the loss of virtue! No earthly resource was left to me; but, resolved to sacrifice my life in vindication of my wrongs, I despatched, on a certain day, my domestic slave to the imperial palace, to strike on the drum, and present my complaint. But doubtless the consciousness of wrong must have led an inexperienced maiden like myself to use expressions, too little respectful, and too well calculated to involve me
in

in guilt towards his majesty. I know that my offence admits not of pardon, and therefore throw myself before your lordship's tribunal, and cheerfully yield up my life."

So saying, she raised the poniard once more to stab herself. The commissioner had paid little regard to her account of Kwoketsu's violence—but when he heard that she had despatched a domestic to the emperor's palace he was seized with dread, and seeing her ready to kill herself, cried out to a young lad* by his side to rush forward and prevent her.

"There is a great deal in your case," said he, "which it was impossible for me to be acquainted with; but let me ask you, since the Chehëen declares that he himself was negociator for your marriage, how say you there was *no* negociator?"

"The ceremonies," she replied, "which were performed by the Chehëen, were for the daughter of my uncle Shueyun. She has long since been espoused by Kwoketsu as his rightful wife.† How then could the Chehëen's intervention be on account of *my* marriage also?"

"What!" exclaimed the commissioner,—“then he has already taken a wife! This being the case, you should have explained the truth to me—what made you so rashly address the emperor?"

"If my presenting an ordinary petition," said Shuey-pingsin,

* On account of her sex and rank.

† See Preface.

pingsin, "could have set the matter right, your lordship should not have proceeded with such certainty on the strength of Kwoketsu's mere assertions. Had I not addressed his majesty, my wrong would never have been righted."

"But the province of marriage," replied he, "pertains to the local authorities; how could you presume to refer it to the emperor? Your address no doubt contains some irrelevant matter, and if so, who do you think will be the sufferer?"

"I could scarcely fail," said she, "to weigh well my expressions in petitioning his majesty; but I have the copy here, and beg* your lordship to inspect it." So saying, she took the paper from her bosom and handed it up to the commissioner, who read as follows:—

"Shueypingsin, the offending daughter of Shuey-keuyih, late member of the military tribunal, but now in exile on the frontier, reverently addresses his majesty—the purport of her petition being the unjust conduct of the provincial Commissioner, who in order to seek favour with his patron, has endeavoured to compel the youthful daughter of an officer of state into wedlock, without the observance of the due forms, and to the great prejudice of the public morals. She humbly deems that the sacred cause of morality† is the most important

* Literally, 'dare to beg your lightening glance.'

† Mingkeaou, 'the famous doctrine' of Confucius—his system of morals.

important part of the imperial government, and that, of all the human relations, marriage gives rise to the first in order. Therefore in arranging every union, the intervention of negociators is indispensable, and previous to the assent of the parties themselves, the authority of the parents must be obtained. When all this has been done, the Six ceremonials must be observed, and the Three stars * shed their influence on the dwelling—the bride may then be carried to her new house. But a case like the present is unheard-of! The father of the male party at court, and not even represented by a delegate—the father of the female in exile, and no word of consent given—the commissioner enters the province, and before he attends to any business, issues two furious mandates in succession, compelling the petitioner to submit to an irregular marriage, merely to seek favour with his patron, and recompense private benefits! This is the conduct of Foongling!—The petitioner, a helpless female, could ill oppose him, and has no means of preserving her honour, except by destroying herself publicly

* Marriages in China have always been celebrated in the evening: hence the allusion in one of the odes of the ancient classic Sheeking: ‘The three stars shine on the gate;’ that is, the three stars of the Chinese constellation, corresponding to a part of Scorpio and Antares, (which, however, cannot always appear in the evening), are risen in the east. The two following lines are used on bridal occasions, exhibited at the doors of the house:

San sing tsae hoo; ‘The three stars of evening shine on the gate.’

Pih leang ying mun, ‘A hundred cars throng the portal.’

licly before his tribunal. But lest her unavenged injuries should hereafter rise up in the shape of calamities to trouble your majesty's reign,* she despatches her domestic emissary, at all hazards, to strike on the drum at the palace gate, and intreats the imperial benevolence to pity her hard case, and punish the commissioner as he justly deserves. Then, although the petitioner will have ceased to exist, she may perchance prove the means of life and safety to others in a similar situation. This memorial is offered up with profound awe."

When the commissioner had seen the beginning of the petition, in which he was accused of "seeking favour with his patron," his fears threw him into a cold sweat;—as he read on attentively, he fell a trembling,—and when he had finished the agitated perusal, his terror was ready to convert itself into rage, which would have vented itself on the victim before him; but seeing her hold the knife in her grasp, and the determination with which she purposed to destroy herself, he be-thought him of the consequences—and wavered. He then

* This is rather a curious passage, and has been rendered as literally as possible. The Chinese say, "When the Emperor abandons virtue, heaven gives him warning by prodigies, as eclipses of the sun and moon, &c. Should he disregard these, prodigies still more striking and serious are the consequence, as droughts, famines, wars, the rushing down of mountain tops, and such like. Confucius himself declared, 'When a government is to be prosperous, there will be prognostics of felicity; when a government is to be overturned, there will be prognostics of evil.' In this manner the fall of the Mongol Tartar dynasty is said to have been predicted." I translate the note of my native scribe on the passage in the context.

then gave up his evil purpose, and quieted her with kind words. "I have been deceived," said he, "on my first arrival, by Kwoketsu, who declared that every preliminary had been settled for your union; it was for this reason I exerted my authority: my motive was good, and I knew not that so much had been wanting. I request, young lady, that you will retire in peace to your home. I will issue an order that you shall not be molested by any ill-intentioned persons. But the petition which you have sent must be recovered;—and this had better be done with all secrecy."

"Your lordship is very indulgent," replied Shueypingsin; "and I can ask for nothing more—but, alas! my servant has already been despatched three days!"

"Three months should make no difference!" exclaimed he, and a trusty domestic was instantly sent, with a description of the young lady's messenger, and a strict charge to go day and night in pursuit of him. Shueypingsin, when she had returned her acknowledgments, left the hall, and stepped into a small sedan, in which she was carried home so quietly, that not only Kwoketsu and her uncle, but the Chehëen himself, remained ignorant of what had passed.

Kwoketsu, in the height of his elation, had selected a fortunate day for the nuptials, and informed Shueyun: who went over to his niece, and congratulated her, saying that the bridegroom had fixed the period for espousing her at her own house.

She

She smiled on hearing this. "Uncle," said the young lady, "pray tell me if it is to be in this life, or in the life to come?"*

"Do not laugh at me," cried he, "you have done that enough already—but as regards the commissioner, the delegate of his majesty, and the awarder of life and death, I suspect *he* is not to be laughed at."

To this she replied, "Sir, you are my uncle and my father's representative; I should hardly think of offering such a slight—but if the commissioner of to-day should prove to be a very different personage from the commissioner of yesterday, I think I may be allowed to laugh at him."

"How happened it," asked Shueyun, "that when his two orders came down, you received them so quietly?—you should have taken *that* opportunity to laugh at him."

"And who knows," said his niece, "but such was my intention in receiving them?" She had scarcely uttered this, when a servant came to announce, that some official person from the commissioner was waiting outside, with a written notice, which he wished to deliver to the young lady. Shueypingsin purposely assumed an air of grave thought, as she exclaimed, "What notice can this be?"

"Oh

* An expression of the Budhists, or Metempsychosists. She alludes to his faith in their doctrines; which, in regard to hell and purgatory (*teyō* and *yewming*), are exactly described in the sixth Book of Virgil, line 738.

“ Oh nothing,” said her uncle ; “ it is merely to hasten you in your preparations ; but wait while I go and inquire—if it is nothing more you need not come out.”

“ Very good,” replied the young lady ; and her uncle went out to receive the emissary, demanding the business of his visit. “ No doubt it is to urge the completion of the marriage ?” said he.

“ By no means,” replied the messenger : “ his lordship commands me to say, that the first press of business left him no time to learn the truth of the lady’s case, and he only yesterday ascertained that her father being exiled, she was left alone and unprotected at home, without being affianced to any one ;—lest, therefore, unprincipled persons should attempt to molest her, his lordship especially sends this prohibitory order.”

So saying he took the paper from an attendant, and gave it to Shueyun. The latter, astounded by what he heard, exclaimed to himself, “ What is all this ?” He uttered not a word, however, but asking the officer to be seated, carried the paper to his niece. “ The commissioner sends this,” said he, “ I do not understand why—pray read it out that I may hear.”

His niece opened the paper, and read it out distinctly as follows : “ Notice from the Commissioner. It appears that Shueykeuyih, member of the military board, being exiled on the frontier, his only daughter
lives

lives unaffianced in solitude at home. Her peculiar situation requires that I call upon the two local magistrates to take her under their careful protection. Should any violent and unprincipled persons offer to molest the young lady, the authorities of the district and those pertaining to her household are commanded to report it instantly, that I may apprehend and punish the offenders severely."

"Why, this is some charm to frighten away sprites!" said Shueypingsin laughing; "it is of little use to me! However, as he sends it, I must take it in proof of good will at least—it shall not be rejected." So saying, she gave her uncle a paper containing two taels of silver for the principal messenger, and another, holding a tenth of the same sum, for his follower, requesting that he would dismiss them.

Shueyun spoke not a word, so stupified was he by his astonishment, but carried the two enclosures to the people and sent them away: then going back to Shueypingsin, "My good niece," exclaimed he, "you were quite right—this commissioner is *not* the commissioner of yesterday; but, after the peremptory order to hasten the marriage, how comes this sudden notice to forbid the same?—It is quite beyond my comprehension."

"There is nothing difficult in the matter," replied she. "When he first arrived here, he fancied I was a poor defenceless girl whom he might easily oppress, and

and accordingly gave orders for the marriage, in compliment to Kwoketsu. Having discovered, however, that your niece is not to be trifled with, he begins to tremble for his office—hence his change of conduct, and this compliment to myself.”

“ But my brother is absent,” said her uncle ; “ what means can *you* have of injuring his lordship, that he should be afraid of you ? ”

“ Do not ask me now, uncle,” replied she, laughing ;—“ wait a couple of days, and the thing will explain itself.”

Full of doubts and perplexities, Shueyun took his departure, and quietly informed Kwoketsu of the notice which had been issued by the commissioner. The young man would not believe him. “ It is impossible ! ” exclaimed he.

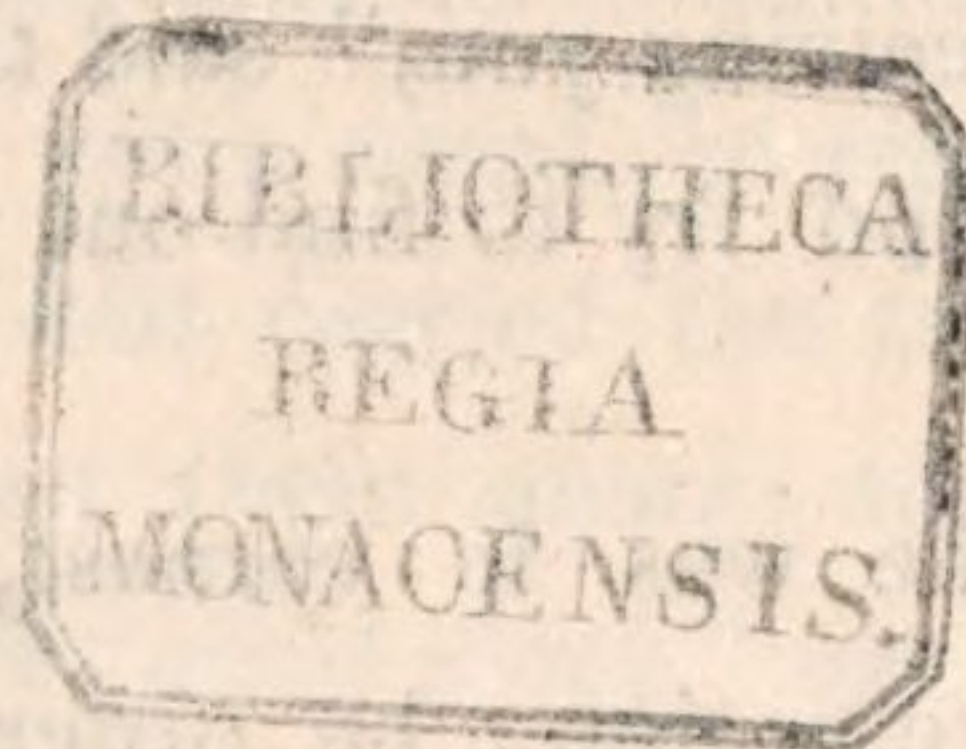
“ I am not deceiving you,” said the other ; “ but make haste—go and try to find out the reason yourself.”

Finding that he was in earnest, Kwoketsu was seized with consternation ; he ordered a chair, and hurried away to call upon the commissioner. No press of business had hitherto prevented the latter from admitting his friend ; but to-day, although at leisure in a back-room, the answer was given that he was busy, and could see nobody. Kwoketsu was obliged to return home. The next day he went again, and so on for three or four days ; but the answer still

was, that he could not be seen. Vexed and enraged at such treatment, the young man exclaimed, "What is the meaning of this change! But if he behaves to me with such contempt, I must send a letter to Peking,—we will then see how long he retains his office!"

But to observe the disgrace of the worthless Kwo-ketsu, and the merits of the chaste Shueypingsin, it is necessary to proceed to another chapter.

END OF VOL. I.



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ERRATA.

Vol. I. page 20, for *sime*, read *time*.

- 26, — *Changknēen*, r. *Changkēen*.
- 49, — *Seaoutau*, r. *Seaoutan*.
- 56, — *parents*, r. *parent's*.
- 100, — *gallopped*, r. *galloped*.
- 135, — *became*, r. *become*.
- 147, — *giving*, r. *given*.
- 162, — *lodgings*, r. *lodging*.
- 236, — *can*. *But*, r. *can but*.

26h

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4 3c

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